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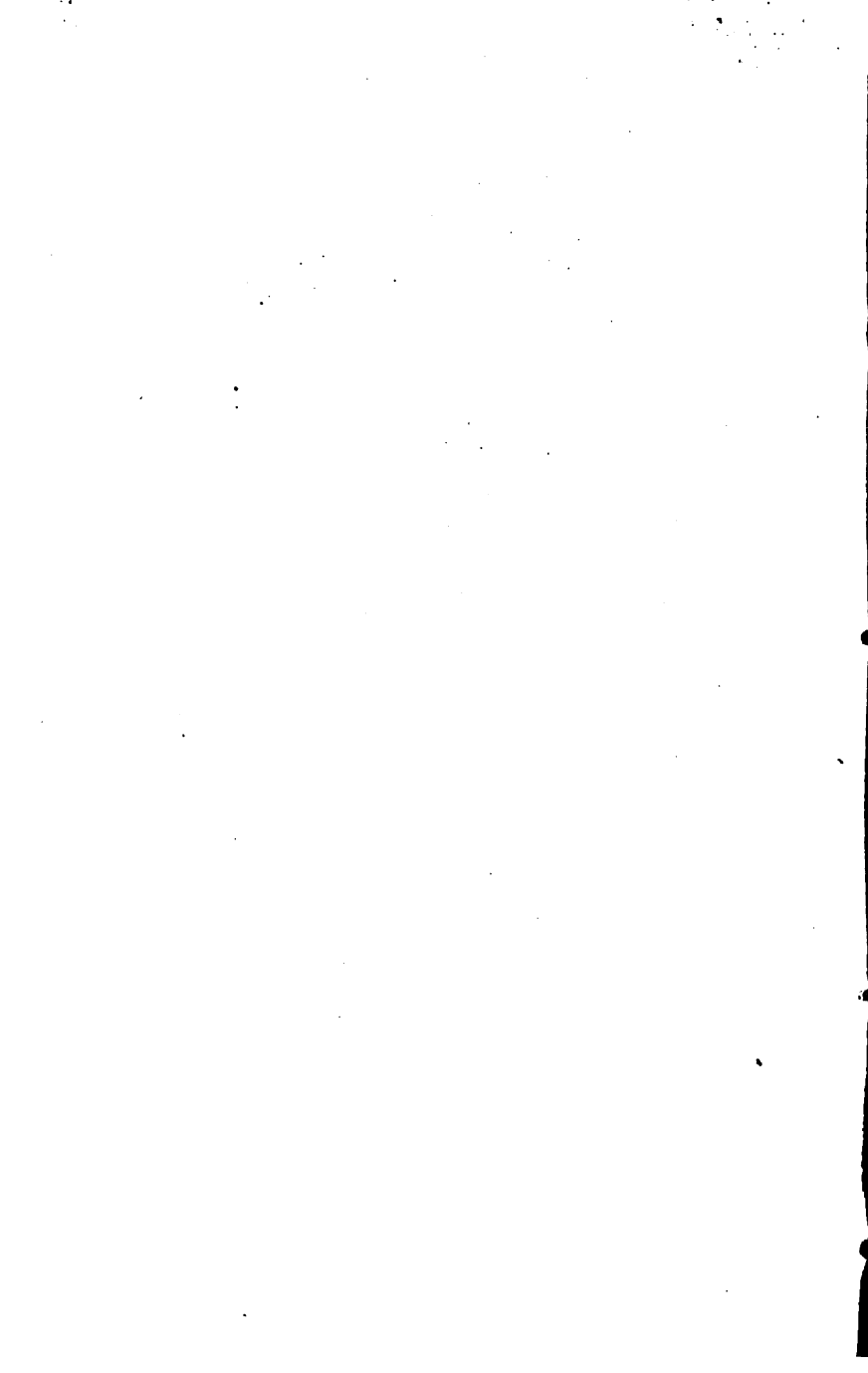
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BABIE



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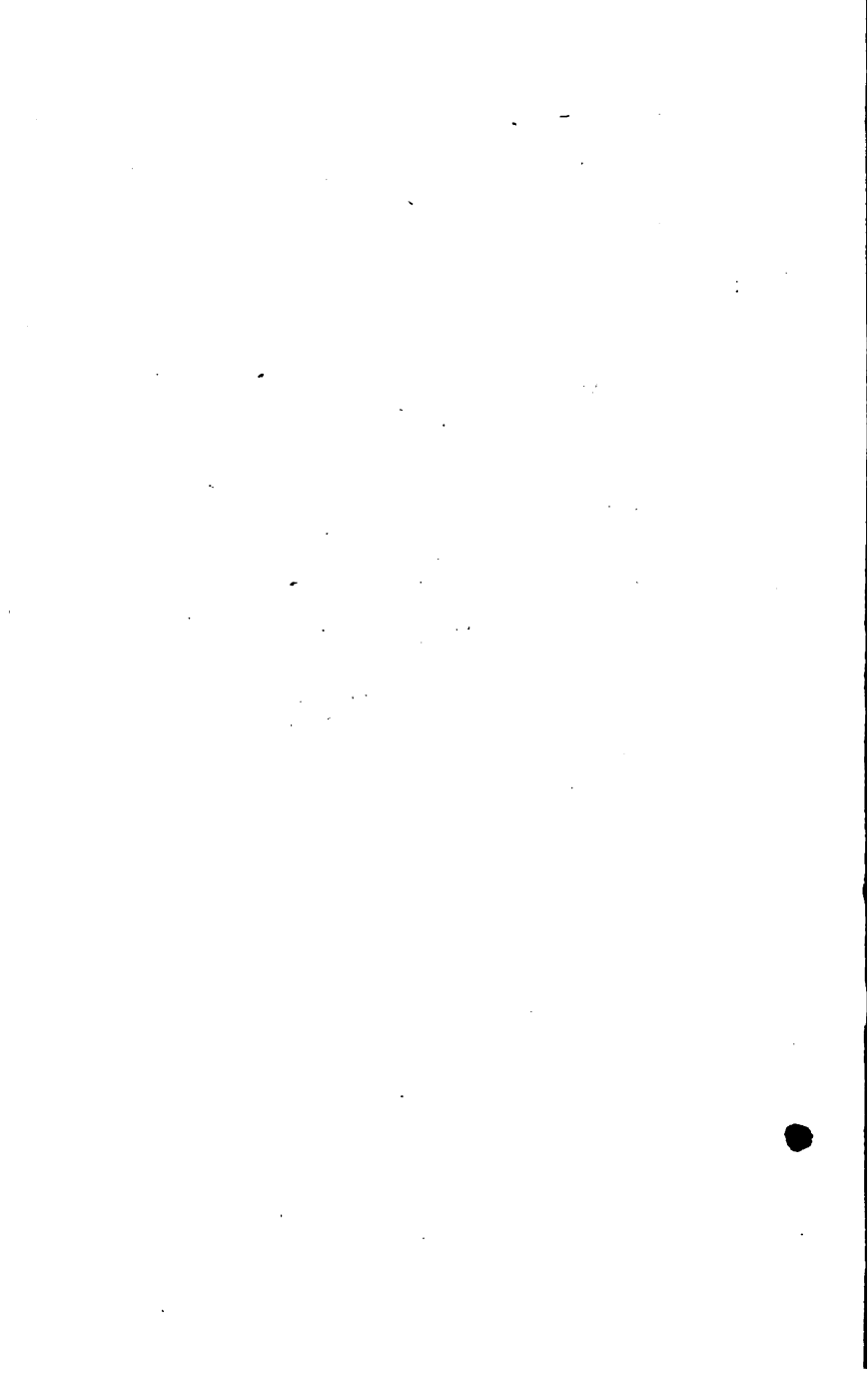
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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HARRY WARD, Babie himself.
HENRY SKELTER, Babie's cousin's husband.
MR. HERODOTUS CRAM, Babie's tutor.
MR. OCTAVUS WARD, Babie's papa.
CHARLIE WILKINS, Babie's chum.
HAIRDRESSER.
MRS. DIANA SKELTER, Babie's cousin.
MRS. OCTAVUS WARD, Babie's mamma.
MADAME AURELIA, a lady friend of Babie.
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Costumes — Modern and appropriate.



BABIE.

ACT I.

SCENE. — *A drawing-room closed in; fireplace R., to the left of this a speaking-tube; two entrances L., two R.; sofa and work-table L.; table, chair, and easy-chair R. Furniture disposed: Door (pract.) in flat.*

Discovered. MRS. WARD seated on sofa, folding flannels; MR. WARD in arm-chair R., reading paper. Several papers on table.

MR. W. (*reads*). Latest by telegraph — m — m — bah! no news: what's come to every thing? (*Scans paper.*) Aha! "We take great pleasure in indorsing the subsidies proposed by the committee. If they be carried, we guarantee a speedy recovery from the present crisis." Good! exactly my opinion.

MRS. W. (*folding shirts*). When you were Babie's age, how many flannels did you wear?

MR. W. None at all, ma'am: the Wards never coddled themselves. Babie is the first Ward that ever looked to flannel as a guardian.

MRS. W. Poor dear! he need look to some one, with such a father!

MR. W. (*taking another paper*). Aha! "We observe with horror and dismay the subsidy bill brought forward by the committee. If it be carried, we must inevitably fall into irretrievable bankruptcy." Good, good! precisely what I say.

MRS. W. I make Babie wear them because his blood is so poor. Haven't you noticed how pale the poor darling is of a morning?

MR. W. (*irritably*). No. Do let me read my papers!

MRS. W. You read papers enough at the club, I should think.

MR. W. I read all I can at the club, I assure you. I buy those they don't have there, and *try* to read them at home, but—

MRS. W. (*crossing R.*). Oh, politics! Whenever I ask you a question, you are buried in some paper.

MR. W. Well, a man must keep himself informed as to party movements, mustn't he? Gad! if I weren't at it all the time, I'd find myself a democratic Ward in no time; for there's a change of platform every campaign, like a horse-car.

MRS. W. (*sitting R.*). I don't know about any such nonsense: but this I do know,—you'd do a deal better to keep yourself informed as to what is passing at home. You have only one child; and he, poor dear, hardly knows you.

MR. W. Which only proves that he's not a wise child, as the old saying is. But that's only a fair specimen of feminine exaggeration.

MRS. W. I don't exaggerate. Have you ever taken care of him? Do you ever think about his education? Do you even know whether he is alive or no? The poor child gets home at only two o'clock, and yet you won't wait lunch for him.

MR. W. But, you know, my digestion—

MRS. W. That's right. Your papers, your club, and your digestion, first, then your poor suffering child. What a father! Ah! if he didn't have me, poor thing! for I know far better than you how to care for him. (*Crosses L., and sits.*)

MR. W. Well, then, what are you complaining of?

MRS. W. I don't complain; for, if you had been in charge of him, he never would have got to be twenty-two years old.

MR. W. Twenty-two! and not out of swaddling clothes!

MRS. W. If you can't avoid being coarse, Mr. Ward, you had better stay at the club. I don't want the example of such vulgarity set to Babie.

MR. W. (*rising*). Very good, ma'am; very good indeed. I'll take your advice. (*Busy picking up papers.*) I can read in peace there, at least. This is what it is to be a family man. (*Crossing, exit 2 E. L.*)

MRS. W. (*rising, crosses R.*). What a model for Babie! When a mother is not by, who is there to care for one? But, thanks to my vigilant care, Babie is without the slightest taint, as innocent and pure (*enter MR. W. L. 2 E.*) as his father ought to be.

MR. W. (*crossing R., MRS. W. L.: aside*). It occurred to me that I don't show proper firmness in going away like that: besides, it rains, and I've mislaid my umbrella. (*Aloud.*) No; I'll read here, and undisturbed, Mrs. Ward. (*Sits R. Pause.*) Mrs. Ward, Babie has now got to be a man, and—

MRS. W. A man? hear him! why, he's the merest child in the world!

MR. W. Humph! Well, at any rate, you won't deny that he's a very backward child.

MRS. W. Well, yes: I think so myself. He often flunks his examinations.

MR. W. Flunks?

MRS. W. That's the word he uses. But it's not his fault, the poor dear! he is so delicate.

MR. W. He must, however, some time or other—

MRS. W. Never fear: I've arranged it all. He is to have a private tutor; and in order that he may be more independent, and less disturbed at his studies, I have fitted up a study for him on the ground-floor. Even now I am expecting the tutor whom Mrs. Wilkins has recommended.

SUSAN (*enters 2 E. L.*). O Mrs. Ward! Master Harry's breakfast has been ready this half-hour, and it's getting quite cold. Sure, he's very late this morning.

MRS. W. And what do you mean, Susan, by criticising Master Harry's actions?

SUSAN. Oh! if you please, ma'am, I was just passing through the dining-room, and I saw—

MRS. W. Never mind the explanation; see if he is in his room.

SUSAN (*crossing to tube, whistles; whistle heard in answer*). Yes, ma'am, he's there. (*In tube.*) Master Harry, your breakfast is getting cold: you'd better hurry. (*Listens.*)

MRS. W. What does the darling say?

SUSAN (*repeating*). He's putting on his coat, and — be up directly, and (*imitating voice*) — Good-morning, mamma.

MRS. W. Dear child! Is Mr. Skelter's room made ready for him, Susan?

SUSAN (*crosses* I E. L.). Yes, ma'am; all but a few last touches. (*Crosses to table, L., and arranges flannels.*)

MR. W. Skelter isn't at all slow about availing himself of our invitation.

MRS. W. Why, it was fully two months ago, that, during our stay at his farm, he promised to visit us. He is coming to get his wife's sister Matilda, who is at school here, and wants me to see to her outfit. You know, she is intended to be Babie's wife; that is, as soon as —

MR. W. Absurd! preposterous! Why, as you yourself said, he is nothing but a child.

MRS. W. Well, as to that —

MR. W. To be sure, between ourselves, in the future —
(BABIE *enters* I E. R.)

SUSAN. Here's Master Harry.

(MR. and MRS. W. *rise, and cross to him.*)

BABIE. Good-morning, mamma. Good-morning, papa. Oh, I'm so hungry! (*Kisses Mrs. W.*)

MRS. W. Are you cold, Babie? are you sure your feet are dry?

BABIE (*aside*). Babie! pah! (*Aloud.*) Yes, mamma, quite dry.

MRS. W. That's right, dear. To make sure, though, I've got you another dozen of flannels. (MR. W., *disgusted, crosses R., and sits.*)

BABIE (*aside*). O Lord! more swaddling-clothes!

MRS. W. And, darling, promise me never again to use them to clean your rifle with. Flannels are meant to protect us from draughts, not to polish guns.

BABIE. I'll remember, mamma. (*Aside.*) They'll be getting me a nurse next.

MRS. W. Susan, take the flannel down to Master Harry's room.

SUSAN. Yes, ma'am. (*Bus. with BABIE, throwing kisses; exit* I E. R.)

BABIE. I've something to tell you, papa. I came home from school with Charlie; and on the way we were talking

about our — our examinations. You see, I was chinning him —

MR. W. Chinning?

MRS. W. He means, he was asking him questions. Yes, dear?

MR. W. Flunk! chinning! curious words. Something new, I suppose. Ah, education means something nowadays.

MRS. W. But, Babie dear, do you know how late it is?

BABIE. No, mamma.

SUSAN (*entering D. in F.*). The new tutor has called, ma'am. (MRS. W. L.)

MRS. W. Show him up. (*Exit SUSAN, D. in F.*)

BABIE (*aside*). What a bore!

MR. W. (*aside*). Another interruption! Somehow I can't have a minute to myself. (*Rises, and takes papers.*)

MRS. W. You don't mean to go away, do you?

MR. W. I can't read here, certainly. I shall finish reading in my own room. (*Bus. collecting papers.*)

MRS. W. And how about the tutor?

MR. W. Engage him, I suppose: I haven't any thing to say about it. (*Exit 2 E. R.*)

MRS. W. What a father!

BABIE. I'm going to breakfast, mamma; I'm so hungry! Good-by, mamma, good-by! (*Aside.*) I must get a sight at this new tutor. (*Exits 2 E. L., blowing kisses.*)

MRS. W. Dear child! (*SUSAN shows CRAM in, D. in F., and exit.*)

CRAM (*bows*). Mrs. Ward, I believe.

MRS. W. (*pointing to arm-chair, R.*). Pray be seated, Mr. Cram. My friend Mrs. Wilkins has told me how admirably you have succeeded with her son. (*Sits L.*)

CRAM (*wheeling chair R. to C, sits.*) Mrs. Wilkins overrates my poor abilities, madam.

MRS. W. I want my son to do as well, and hence my need of your services. I know your terms, and I accept them.

CRAM. I shall endeavor, madam, to merit the good opinion you have of me. Is your son to come to my house, or am I to come here?

MRS. W. Pardon me, sir, are you a bachelor?

CRAM. No, madam: I am married.

MRS. W. In that case you will come here.

CRAM. I understand you, madam; but you take a useless precaution.

MRS. W. You are a widower, then?

CRAM. Virtually.

MRS. W. Where is your wife?

CRAM. I have no secrets from the mothers of my pupils. Three years ago, a bachelor, I gave instruction in a family where there was employed a governess. She was beautiful, I a fool: we married. After six months of happiness, alternating with violent quarrels, one night she left me abruptly. Another case of incompatibility of temper! She cared nothing for study: I thoroughly despised her love of coquetry. We finally effected an amicable separation, she to resume her employment of governess, I to continue my business. Out of my earnings I make her a modest allowance, which her mother periodically fetches her; but I have not seen her since our separation.

MRS. W. Don't you know what has become of her?

CRAM. No more than you.

MRS. W. I pity you most deeply.

CRAM. Perhaps I should be to be pitied if I did know about her.

MRS. W. Perhaps. But let us talk about Babie.

CRAM. Babie? madam, I assure you there is no baby.

MRS. W. Oh! you quite misunderstand me, Mr. Cram. I refer to my son.

CRAM. Ten thousand pardons, madam! I thought you meant —

MRS. W. He will soon be up from breakfast and I shall see him for yourself. And, in the mean time, while waiting, I want to give you some idea of his ways, his habits and of my intentions in regard to him.

CRAM. It will be of service also to know what progress he has made in his studies.

MRS. W. Well, he has been now three years at college, — a professional freshman, he calls him-

CRAM. I'm not surprised at that. In these days a prolong their undergraduate life to the utmost. The races, the clubs, the theatres, and — other amiable amusements absorb the better part of their time, so that, when we do catch them, it is very difficult to ex-

their dulled attention on their books. But don't be alarmed, my dear madam. I have an infallible method, and can say with pride that it has succeeded with regular idiots.

MRS. W. Do you mean to call my son an —

CRAM. Heaven forbid! I spoke of former pupils.

MRS. W. My son has been brought up under my own eye; in fact, his whole knowledge of human nature has been acquired in this house. I have endowed him with good principles, a sound, moral education: his conduct has always been exemplary, and I have the satisfaction of delivering him to you pure and unsullied.

CRAM. I congratulate you, madam.

MRS. W. I accept your congratulations, because I feel that I deserve them; and, if my son is not further advanced in his studies, it is because his health needs so much care. But you shall see for yourself how delicate and weakly he is.

CRAM. Indeed! dear me!

MRS. W. Yes. He inherits it from his father, poor dear! Therefore, Mr. Cram, you must not fatigue him, even while endeavoring to get him through his examinations as soon as possible.

CRAM. But without fatiguing him?

MRS. W. Yes. How long will it take to prepare him?

CRAM. Without making him work?

MRS. W. No; but without getting him sick over his books; for it completely upsets me to see him ill.

CRAM. But, madam, under these conditions, it is extremely difficult to tell you exactly how long. I must examine him first.

(BABIE heard without.)

MRS. W. (*rising*). Here he is. Now you can "chin" him a little, as Babie says.

CRAM (*rising*). (*Aside.*) Chin! Oho!

(BABIE enters 2 E. L., while CRAM replaces chair R.)

BABIE. Hallo, Cram! how are you?

MRS. W. What! you already know Mr. Cram?

BABIE (*aside*). I forgot she was here. (*Aloud.*) Yes, mamma.

CRAM. I have had the pleasure of meeting your son at Mrs. Wilkins's; but I only knew him by his prænomen. (*Aside.*) And I certainly couldn't have recognized him from

her description. (*Aloud.*) As to his health, madam, I assure you that, in my opinion, you alarm yourself unnecessarily. He has never appeared to me at all sickly.

BABIE (C.). I sick? (*Showing muscle.*) Just feel that, will you?

MRS. W. (L.). You can't trust to appearances. He is weak internally.

BABIE (*striking chest*). Here?

MRS. W. (*crosses to him*). Don't do that, darling: you will hurt yourself.

BABIE. Oh, no! mamma: I —

MRS. W. Now, don't contradict me; but answer Mr. Cram, who will examine you.

BABIE. On what?

MRS. W. To find out what you know.

BABIE (*aside*). That won't take long. (*Gets near CRAM; MRS. W. back to L.*)

CRAM. What instruction should be given to a minor who is too extravagant?

BABIE. He should be instructed — (*Aside.*) Do I know?

MRS. W. Don't be afraid, Babie.

BABIE. They should tell him to spend less.

CRAM. Good! (*Aside.*) He isn't very solid. (*Aloud.*) That is surely wise counsel.

MRS. W. Was that right, Mr. Cram?

CRAM. Certainly, madam. He could always be told that safely. Another question: You become the heir of an uncle who has debts: who is to pay them?

BABIE. That's none of *my* business.

CRAM. Very good. (*Aside.*) The fellow's an ass!

MRS. W. Very good indeed, Babie.

CRAM. Tell me, now, what department of law you have given especial attention to.

BABIE. Breach of promise.

CRAM (*suppressing laugh*). Indeed!

MRS. W. My dear child! you have studied that?

BABIE (*crosses L. behind Mrs. W.*). Why, yes, mamma; all the fellows do. (*Laughs to CRAM.*)

CRAM. Besides, madam, it is in the statutes.

MRS. W. A wicked book! (*To C.*)

BABIE (*down L.*). (*Aside.*) A cursedly *hard* one, certainly.

CRAM. I shall only teach him what is absolutely necessary; and, in from six months to two years —

MRS. W. Two years?

CRAM. Certainly; that is, should illness intervene. (*Crosses to C.; MRS. W. R.*) You will have your first lesson to-morrow, at ten.

BABIE. Whenever you like, Cram: there is no hurry.

MRS. W. Oh! I forgot to say that Charlie Wilkins is to take his lessons with Babie.

CRAM. As you prefer (*bowing*). Good-morning, ma'am (*at D. in F.*). (*Aside.*) Pure and unsullied! Ha, ha! (*Exit to R.*)

MRS. W. (*crossing L. to sofa during exit, sits*). Mr. Cram is very clever, Babie.

BABIE (*going to her, and leaning over sofa*). Dear little mamma! I love you so much! (*Kisses her.*)

MRS. W. Oh, you wheedler! What does Babie want?

BABIE. Mamma, I don't feel well.

MRS. W. Poor thing! where do you suffer?

BABIE. In the pocket, mamma.

MRS. W. How you frightened me!

BABIE. My pocket needs a remedy, mamma.

MRS. W. I don't understand it, my dear. We furnish you with every thing, indulge you in every way, and yet you are always short of money. What do you do with it?

BABIE (*sitting by her*). It isn't for myself I want it, but for the boys. You see, I must set 'em up to cigars and drinks—of soda-water—once in a while. Come, mamma, I only want an advance on my next month's—

MRS. W. (*aside*). Generous boy! (*Aloud.*) But I'm over head and ears in debt already. Your father is so stingy. Ah! here he is now, ask him.

MR. W. (*enters 2 E. R., reading*). "Russia says nothing, England is silent, Austria maintains the closest reserve. A general outbreak is impending." (*Stops C.*)

BABIE (*crosses to him*). Papa, dear little papa, how I love you! (*Embraces him.*)

MR. W. Is this my birthday?

BABIE (*R. of him*). No, papa, but I read this morning in the paper—

MR. W. You read the papers?

BABIE. Yes; I do as you do, papa. I saw they were increasing the appropriations, and—

MR. W. Yes, yes!

BABIE. And don't you think you had better increase my allowance, papa?

MR. W. Bah! I give you ten dollars a month. That's quite enough; more than I used to get.

BABIE. Why, papa, the papers say that prices are unprecedented.

MR. W. Indeed!

BABIE. And, with ten dollars —

MR. W. Well, well! ask your mother.

BABIE. I did; but she gave me nothing.

MRS. W. (*rising*). You know, Babie, if I only had any —

MR. W. I'm not surprised at that: you ruin yourself in dress.

MRS. W. Hear him! Just look at this dress, worn threadbare.

BABIE. In fact, papa, I'm dead broke.

MRS. W. (*at his L.*). And I can't look my milliner in the face.

BABIE. Haven't even the price of a glass of "Cincin."

MR. W. A what?

BABIE. Cincin. Come, papa.

MRS. W. And I couldn't buy a postage-stamp.

MR. W. Well, you don't want one, do you?

MRS. W. Only a few dollars!

BABIE. Only a little more!

MR. W. I'm very sorry, but I'm short to-day. I would, only —

BABIE (*aside*). Sold again! (*Goes R.*)

MRS. W. Always the same story. (*Goes L.*)

SUSAN (*D. in F.*). Mr. Charlie Wilkins.

(CHARLES *enters*.)

MR. W. (*to BABIE while CHARLES pays respects to MRS. W.*). Here is a model young man for you; take pattern by him. I warrant you he isn't extravagant.

BABIE (*aside*). I'll bet he isn't. His mother don't give him the chance. (*Goes C. to CHARLES.*)

MR. W. (*R.*). I was telling Babie to form his habits on yours, Charlie, for I hear glowing accounts of your economy from your mother.

CHARLES. I'm sure I don't deserve such praise.

BABIE (*aside*). That's true enough.

CHARLES. It is true that my little savings go into the bank —

BABIE (*aside*). Yes; faro-bank.

CHARLES. But I am really very far from being what I could wish.

MRS. W. You came to study with Babie.

CHARLES. Yes. I'm always at it, Mrs. Ward, I fear, even to an injurious extent. (BABIE *laughs*.)

MRS. W. So Mr. Cram tells me.

CHARLES. My beloved tutor! (*Aside*.) I wasn't prepared for favorable testimony from him. (*Aloud*.) But I am near forgetting my errand. I was going to ask you — (BABIE *makes signs*.) What! hasn't he told you?

BABIE. I didn't have time. I was just going to when you came.

MR. W. What is it?

CHARLES. Will you let him come with me to dinner to-day?

MRS. W. Where to dine?

CHARLES. Oh! quietly at home, where we can discuss the examinations.

MR. W. Willingly. (*Goes C., CHARLES R.*)

MRS. W. (L.). But you forget, cousin Skelter is coming to-day.

BABIE (C.). And his wife?

MRS. W. No: she never comes to town, to his great regret.

BABIE (*aside*). And mine.

MR. W. I'm not sure he'll come to-day. At any rate, we can apologize for Babie's dining out, on the ground of his need of studious companionship. (*Crosses L., and sits on sofa.* MRS. W. *crosses to C.*)

MRS. W. Very well, dear, since your father consents.

BABIE (*crosses to R.*). Thank you, papa. (*Aside to CHARLES*.) It's all O K when you don't ask him for money.

MRS. W. You know that to-morrow you take your lessons here together.

CHARLES. That's good, two can work so much better than one.

MRS. W. (*going L.*). Mr. Cram has promised that in from six months to two years —

MR. W. Who is Cram?

MRS. W. The tutor.

MR. W. Ah, yes!

MRS. W. What a father! (*Sits; they converse.*)

CHARLES (*aside to BABIE*). How much did your father give you?

BABIE. Not a red; and yours?

CHARLES. Same here. But I've still two dictionaries to shove up.

BABIE. And I, four.

CHARLES. They talk of economy. Gad! it wouldn't cost us half as much to give us money as to replace our worn-out dictionaries. (*Both laugh.*)

BABIE. Sh!

CHARLES. Shall we light out?

BABIE. Yes. Good-by, mamma. (*They go up.*)

MRS. W. (*rising*). Get back before dark, dear.

BABIE. Yes, mamma. (*Exeunt D. in F.*)

MRS. W. (*calling*). Look out, and don't get run over.

VOICE OF BABIE. Never fear, mamma.

MR. W. A boy of twenty-two run over!

MRS. W. (*down c.*). He is so careless! What would you say to see him brought home all crushed to death?

MR. W. Absurd!

SUSAN (*entering D. in F.*). Mr. and Mrs. Skelter.

MRS. W. How! Mrs. Skelter with him?

(*MR. W. rises as enter MR. and MRS. S.*)

MRS. S. (*running down c.*). My dear Mrs. Ward, I'm delighted to see you.

MRS. W. (*kissing her*). Such an agreeable surprise! (*MR. W. and MR. S. up c.*)

MR. S. How are you, Ward? How devilish well you are looking! (*They converse.*)

SUSAN (*to MRS. S.*). Shall I take your things, ma'am?

MRS. S. (*giving wraps*). Thank you.

MRS. W. And, Susan, see to the baggage.

(*SUSAN exit D. in F.*)

MRS. W. (*to MR. S.*). It is very good of you to bring your wife.

MR. S. I was going to send a telegram, but she preferred to surprise you. (*Comes R.*)

MR. W. (*down c. by MRS. S.*). And very agreeably she has surprised us.

MRS. W. Now that we have got you, we hope to keep

you a long time. (*They sit on sofa L.; MR. W. draws chair to MRS. SKELTER'S end.*)

MRS. S. To be sure you shall. I don't get my liberty often enough to relinquish it easily. Life at the farm seems so terribly poky and humdrum whenever a visit to town suggests to me what might be. For I'm not old yet, or ugly either: am I, Mr. Ward?

MR. W. I'm afraid, if I were a younger man, I should give you the best of proofs that you were neither, by falling in love with you myself.

MR. S. Come, come, Ward, none of that.

MR. W. Why, you can't be jealous of an old fellow like me.

MRS. S. Oh! but he is — a perfect Bluebeard!

MRS. W. O Mr. Skelter!

MRS. S. He even refused, until now, to bring me to town, when he comes every three months to the meetings of the Compressed Guano Company, Limited. He says city air contains too much oxygen for women. //

MR. W. Where the deuce did he hear that?

MR. S. (*winking*). In "The Agricultural Journal."

MRS. S. But this time, as he was to bring back my sister Matilda, I insisted on coming.

MRS. W. I'm ever so much indebted to your sister.

MRS. S. And here I am in town again. Now for shopping, theatres, balls, and the whole round of my former amusements!

MR. S. (*aside*). Things begin to assume an expensive aspect which I did not foresee.

MR. W. Permit me to offer my escort for your shopping and —

MR. S. I say, Ward, I'm here, you know.

MR. W. My dear Skelter, you don't suppose —

MR. S. Oh! I know you old fellows.

MRS. W. Oh! I assure you, he gave up gallantry long ago.

MR. S. How's that, Ward?

MR. W. Yes: I am absorbed in politics very much as you are in the Compressed Guano Company, Limited (*winks*). (MRS. S. *goes up C.*)

MRS. S. By the by, where is Babie?

MRS. W. He just this minute went out.

MRS. S. He is quite well?

MRS. W. Yes. (*To SUSAN, who enters D. in F.*) Hand me the last picture he had taken.

SUSAN (*giving photograph from mantle*). Here it is, ma'am. I came to tell Mrs. Skelter that her trunks were carried up.

MRS. W. Very well. (*To MRS. S.*) Every year since he was born we have had a picture taken. (*Exit SUSAN D. in F.*)

MRS. S. Oh, isn't he nice-looking!

MR. W. (*pulling up collar*). I didn't know you admired children.

MRS. S. Oh! he used to amuse me so much last summer on our rides about the country!

MRS. W. He is so young, so inexperienced!

MR. S. (*down R.*). Young? Gad! when I was his age —

MR. W. Better not say what.

MRS. S. How much he has grown! (*Puts photograph on table.*)

MRS. W. You will say so when you see him. But wouldn't you like to go to your room?

MRS. S. Thanks. (*Rises.*)

MR. W. (*rising*). I'll show her, my dear.

MRS. W. (*rising*). Mr. Ward! (*To MR. S.*) At what time would you like to dine?

MR. S. Ask my wife. You must excuse me this evening.

MR. W. You have an engagement? (*Going R.*)

MR. S. I'm sorry to say, yes. I promised to dine with a distinguished agriculturist this evening. I have so little time to myself when I come to town for the Compressed Guano Company, Limited —

MRS. W. Yes: business must occupy you so much, poor fellow!

MRS. S. Don't pity him. What could we do with him in the shops? (*Going I E. L.*) Are you coming?

MRS. W. (*going*). Yes; go on. (*Exeunt I E. L.*)

MR. S. (*crosses L. to table, taking photograph*). A strapping fellow this boy of yours. What are you going to make of him?

MR. W. I don't know yet. He is still at school, so there's time enough. His tutor has promised, that, in from six months to two years —

MR. S. Bah! you ought to hand him over to me. He's being too much coddled here at home; wants something to bring him out.

MR. W. I fear, if you were to take him, he would go to the Devil at once.

MR. S. That's a rather neat way of identifying me with the Evil One. But come, Ward, what do you say? Shall he come with me, and see something of life?

MR. W. My dear sir, you don't know him. Why, the mere hearsay of such scenes as you call life would shock him inexpressibly. You don't know how innocent he is. (*Goes C.*)

MR. S. (*aside*). I'm afraid *you* don't know *just* how innocent he is. (*Aloud, going C.*) But do you mean to tell me that even your son, at his age —

MR. W. Why, that is what his mother maintains. She has brought him up at the end of her apron-strings.

MR. S. And he has never broken loose at all? Pooh!

MR. W. His mother says that Babie is innocence itself.

MR. S. Well, as for me, I have been young myself; am young now (*aside*) once in three months. (*Aloud.*) And I know very well, from my own experience, that all boys, if they are not idiots, pass through certain phases, like the moon.

MR. W. You mean they get full, I suppose.

MR. S. No, no. There are three phases through which they inevitably pass, — chambermaids, widows, and married women; and they pass from one to another as their effrontery develops.

MR. W. If my wife only heard you!

MR. S. Never mind your wife. Why, man (*slapping back*), you were young yourself once.

MR. W. (*chuckling*). Well, I don't deny that.

MR. S. Well, then?

MR. W. But I shouldn't be doing my duty as a father if I permitted Babie to do as I did.

MR. S. Provided, of course, he asks your permission.

MR. W. Well, if it is as my wife says, certainly you can't complain; for our wives intend him to marry your sister-in-law.

MR. S. What! before he has sown his wild oats? Not if I know it.

MR. W. You prefer —

MR. S. I will never consent to this marriage till I am convinced he has passed through the three phases. (*Goes R.*)

MR. W. Why?

MR. S. Because, if he hasn't before marriage, he will after, with this difference: that he finishes with the chamber-maids, and begins with the married woman, — a bad prospect for my poor Matilda's happiness.

MR. W. The Devil take you and your philosophy! (*Goes L.*) But hush! here he is.

BABIE (*entering D. in F., aside*). Dictionaries only brought two-fifty; just my luck! (*Aloud.*) Hallo, cousin Harry! (*Down R.*)

MR. S. Ah! how are you, my boy? (*Shake.*)

BABIE. And your wife, how is she?

MR. S. Like my conservatories, — blooming.

MR. W. You can judge for yourself.

(*Enter, I E. L., MRS. S. and MRS. W., dressed to go out; cross to C.*)

BABIE. Is she here?

MR. S. See.

BABIE (*C., to MRS. S.*). Ah! how d'ye do, cousin? (*Embraces her.*) I'm ever so glad to see you.

MR. S. (*to C., between them*). Come, that will do.

MRS. S. Pooh! a mere child.

BABIE (*aside*). She too!

MR. S. Rather a large child.

MR. W. But he's my son, you know.

MR. S. I've no more confidence on that account. (*Goes up with MRS. S.*)

SUSAN (*enters D. in F.*). The carriage is ready, ma'am.

MRS. W. (*L., with MR. W.*). Very well; bring me my things. (*SUSAN exit D. in F.*)

MRS. S. (*down R. with MR. S.*). Mrs. Ward is going with us this afternoon to my father's.

BABIE (*C., aside*). I'm going too.

MR. S. This is a visit you must make with me.

MR. S. (*aside*). Hang the visit! (*Aloud.*) But I haven't time to send regrets to my friend.

MRS. S. A word will do. Send him a line by a messenger.

BABIE (*to MRS. W.*). But I've agreed to meet Charlie.

MRS. W. Send him word, darling. (*BABIE sits L., MR. S. R., to write; ladies go up.*)

MR. W. (*L.*). I'll put them in a carriage, and be off to the club. (*This aside; looks at watch.*) Three o'clock! Gad!

the papers will all be in use. (*SUSAN enters, and assists MRS. W.*)

MRS. S. (*R. of fire*). O Mr. Ward! please help me put on my gloves?

MR. W. (*going R.*). With pleasure; but, I warn you, I'm very clumsy.

BABIE (*writing*). "My dear Aurelia, the unexpected arrival of company" —

MR. S. (*writing*). "My dear Aurelia, I came to town this morning, and am longing to see you."

BABIE. "Shall be obliged to put off that little supper" —

MR. S. "I shall take supper this evening with you" —

BABIE. "Your annoyed but devoted" —

MR. S. "Your devoted and impatient" — (*To BABIE.*)
Got an envelope? (*SUSAN, who has come down, hands one.*)
Thank you, my dear.

BABIE. "Madame Aurelia, No. 36" —

MR. S. "— 'relia, No. 36" — Now for a messenger.
(*Both rise, and meet C. To BABIE.*) Shall I send your letter?

BABIE. Thanks: I'm going out. I'll take yours.

MR. S. Oh! I won't trouble you. (*Both go up.*)

MRS. S. (*R., to MR. W.*). Oh, how clumsy you are!

MR. W. Ah! my dear Mrs. Skelter, if it were any one but you, my fingers would be nimble enough.

BABIE. Allow me.

MRS. S. Thanks. (*Comes down C.*)

BABIE. Ah, cousin, I'm awfully fond of you!

MRS. S. Tut, tut! Babie!

BABIE. Babie! Not a bit, you shall see. (*Kisses hand.*)

MRS. S. Do be quiet. (*Goes up.*)

MR. W. (*offering arm*). May I have the pleasure? (*Exeunt D. in F.*)

BABIE (*aside*). Cut out by my father!

(*SUSAN down L.*)

MRS. W. (*taking MR. S.'s arm*). Are you coming, Babie?

BABIE. Yes, mamma.

MRS. W. (*to S.*). A mere child, I tell you. (*Exeunt D. in F.*)
(*BABIE runs to SUSAN, and kisses her, when MR. S. and*

MRS. W. return and surprise him. He starts away.
Tableau.) (*Ring curtain.*)

MR. S. (*aside*). The three phases! The chambermaids —
(*Quick curtain.*)

ACT II.

SCENE. — BABIE'S study, closed in. Two entrances R., two L., small closet between doors R. Bookcase at back. Between doors L. a consol table. Speaking-tube (prac.) R. Piano near L. I E.; stool underneath; chairs disposed. Near R. I E. a large table with books, papers, inkstand, tobacco-jar, etc. Chairs on either side of it, sofa in front. Arm-chair C.

Discovered. BABIE in dressing-gown and bib, in arm-chair C., smoking cigarette. HAIRDRESSER at work on him.

HAIRDRESSER. I dress your hair much more often now that you have moved to the ground-floor, sir.

BABIE. Yes; living here I go out more, and need keep myself in better shape. Ah! this is something like. (*Pointing.*) Here my study, there (R. I E.) my bedroom, there (L. 2 E.) my bath-room, and two ways to get in and out, this one (R. 2 E.) by the front door, and this (L. I E.) a private stair to papa's room. Cosey is no name for it.

HAIRDRESSER. Yes, sir: you couldn't have a better place to study.

BABIE. Study! Yes, oh, yes! it would be a rather good place to study. I hadn't thought of that: that's another recommendation. But now I can begin life,—visit the balls and theatres, and come home at whatever time, and with whatever breath, suits me best. Adieu cardamom-seeds! adieu the fragrant clove! And, above all, I'll be rid of that cursed name Babie for some part of the day; at any rate, I'll try not to deserve it! But how are you getting on?

HAIRDRESSER. Almost through, sir. (*Gives glass.*)

BABIE. Give it a little more curl there.

SUSAN (*enters L. I E.; aside*). He's having his hair dressed; for what, I wonder?

BABIE. What do you want, Susan?

SUSAN. I came to see if you had any buttons to sew on.

BABIE. Oh! then I wish you'd mend the pocket of my dress waistcoat: it's in my bedroom there.

SUSAN (C.). Your *dress* waistcoat?

BABIE. Certainly: why not?

SUSAN (*going* R. 1 E.). Very well, master Harry, I'll mend it. (*Aside.*) There's a woman in the case. (*Exit* 1 E. R.)

MR. S. (*knocking* R. 2 E.). Anybody here?

BABIE. Come in, cousin. (MR. S. *enters.*)

MR. S. (*down* R.). Can a fellow smoke in your den? (*He is in full dress covered with a duster.*)

BABIE. Certainly. You will find cigars on the table: they are not very good, but papa is so mean.

MR. S. (R.). Thanks: I prefer a pipe. (*Fills and lights one.*) It reminds me of home. Hallo! you're titivating yourself; going out to make conquests, eh?

BABIE. No. But you know my hair is naturally curly, and —

HAIRDRESSER (*giving glass*). How will that do, sir?

BABIE. First-rate. (*Removes bib, and comes* R.)

MR. S. (*to* HAIRDRESSER, *who is going*). Hold on, young man! just put a scientific parting on this mop of mine. (*Goes* C. *to chair, and sits.*)

BABIE (*on sofa*). Hallo! you are going to have your hair dressed?

MR. S. Oh! I have it done once in three months. (*Winks.*)

HAIRDRESSER (*shocked*). Only four times a year! (*This aside.*)

MR. S. When I come to town on that Compressed Guano business. You know, you never can tell what may happen.

BABIE. Ah! almost any thing you wanted might happen: you are your own master.

MR. S. Naturally. I am married.

BABIE. Has a fellow got to be married, then, to have his freedom?

MR. S. Oh! it's not essential. (*Aside.*) He's playing innocence to me: I must try and unearth him.

BABIE (*aside*). How can I manage to get out this evening. His wife dines at her sister's, and I must somehow —

HAIRDRESSER (*giving glass*). How's that, sir?

MR. S. That will do. (*Rises* C.)

BABIE (*rising, going* L.; *aside*). Just the thing, if I only dared. Hang it, I'll risk it.

HAIRDRESSER (*at R. 2 E.*). Good-day, gentlemen.

BABIE. Remember to-morrow. (HAIRDRESSER *exit*.)

SKELTER (*down R., opening duster*). I say, how's this? (*Showing full dress*.)

BABIE. Why, cousin! Does the Compressed Guano Company—

MR. S. Limited: don't forget the Limited. There are limits to every thing. No, no! that's for my wife. In confidence, now, I dine this afternoon with a lady friend. Before I left home I sent her a basket of game and fruit—

BABIE (*coming C.*). Really!

MR. S. I tell my wife, you know, it's for the Agricultural Exhibition. (*Comes C.*)

BABIE. First-rate! and I tell mother I'm going to Charley's when really I go—

MR. S. Aha! you rascal! caught at last. (*Strikes him violently on back.*)

BABIE (*rubbing back, aside*). A little too hearty, that.

MR. S. (*laughing*). And your father believes you to be so innocent.

BABIE. And don't you believe it?

MR. S. Am I a fool? Ah! your father is the innocent one.

BABIE. But not a word, you know. Now, between you and me, I don't care particularly about dining at home to-day.

MR. S. And I care so little that I've already asked your mother to excuse me. I told her the Compressed Guano Company, Limited, gave a dinner to-day.

BABIE. Well?

MR. S. Well, there is no dinner.

BABIE. Good! Then I'm going with you.

MR. S. (*slaps back*). Aha, you rascal!

BABIE (*rubbing himself*). That is, if I'm not crippled before we start. (*The whistle of the speaking-tube is heard.*)

MR. S. (*L. to sofa*). What's that?

BABIE (*going R. to tube*). Mamma is calling me.

MR. S. (*sitting on sofa*). Talk of maternal instinct!

BABIE (*listening, then speaking in tube*). No, mamma.

MR. S. What does she want?

BABIE. She asks if I want any thing. (*In the tube.*) But, mamma, I should like very much to go to the dinner of the

Compressed Guano Company, Limited. Can my cousin take me? (*Listening and repeating.*) With pleasure: I have confidence in him. (*In the tube.*) Thank you, mamma. (*L. to Mr. S.*)

MR. S. If she only knew!

BABIE. Now, cousin, between you and me, I don't know exactly how to manage. You see, I have invited a young lady to supper —

MR. S. And I had notified my lady friend that I would dine with her this afternoon:

BABIE. This will work to a charm.

MR. S. We'll go out to the dinner —

BABIE. Then separate —

MR. S. An idea! Who is your friend? Particularly fastidious?

BABIE. Well, no.

MR. S. Neither is mine.

BABIE. Well?

MR. S. Now my idea is — a party of four.

BABIE. Good! A party of four let it be. (*Down R.*)

MR. S. (*up C.*). I'll go and engage the room and dinner.

BABIE (*up C. to Mr. S.*). What a time we shall have, eh?

MR. S. Oh, you rascal! (*As if to slap him on the back.*)

BABIE (*getting back R.*). Hold on! you mean well, I know, but I'd rather not.

MR. S. Milksop! (*Exit 2 E. R.*)

BABIE (*down R.*). Now for a day of pleasure. No possible way of getting caught in this. (*Crosses L.*)

SUSAN (*entering I E. R., crying*). Oh, you bad boy!

BABIE. Now here's a go. Why, what the deuce —

SUSAN. See what I found in the pocket. (*Reading note.*)
“My big Babie” —

BABIE (*aside*). One of Aurelia's notes! (*To C.*)

SUSAN. “I send you the package which you left here. Pay the messenger, for I have no change. Until I see you, darling, believe me your ever fond Aurelia.”

BABIE. Give me the letter.

SUSAN. This is where you spend your time when you ought —

BABIE (*to R.*). Will you give it to me? (*Snatches it.*)

SUSAN. She's a horrid thing.

BABIE. She isn't any thing of the sort: she's a poor but

respectable widow lady, at least fifty, and very homely, very ugly indeed, Susan; and I—well, I employ her out of charity.

SUSAN. Yes, indeed; and she calls you her big baby out of charity, too, I dare say. This is where your allowance goes; is it? Ah! charity covers a multitude of sins.

BABIE. Come, Susy dear, don't make a row (*embraces her*). Be good.

SUSAN (*putting him away*). Get away! don't give me any of your charity. This sha'n't go on.

BABIE. Are you going to tell mamma?

SUSAN. Yes, I am.

BABIE. Then I'll have you turned away, see if I don't. She won't believe a word you say.

SUSAN. She will.

BABIE. She won't.

SUSAN. She will.

BABIE. She—sh!—what's that? (*Knock I E. L.*)

MRS. W. (*outside*). It is I, Babie.

BABIE (*going L.*). (*Aside.*) Mamma! What will she think?

SUSAN (*sitting sofa*). Don't be afraid. I always have a collar in my pocket, for emergencies. (*Sews busily on collar which she takes from apron.*)

BABIE (*opens door L.*). Come in, mamma.

MRS. W. (*enters*). (*Aside.*) Susan here? (*Aloud, going C.*) What are you doing here, Susan?

SUSAN. I'm mending, ma'am.

BABIE (*L.*). I asked her to come and fix my button-holes.

MRS. W. Are they too large,—your button-holes?

SUSAN. All of 'em, ma'am.

MRS. W. (*going R.*). And do you mend them with black thread?

BABIE (*to C.*). Hallo!

SUSAN (*rising*). Dear me! I hadn't noticed. I'll finish them upstairs.

MRS. W. But, Susan, you've been crying.

SUSAN. It's a sty, ma'am. I often have 'em.

MRS. W. (*aside*). Can this be accidental? (*Aloud.*) Very well, miss; but in future remember that my son's room is no place for you. You will come to me to get his mending.

SUSAN (*going L.*) Yes, ma'am. (*Aside.*) Aurelia! Oh, if I only knew her! (*Exit I E. L.*)

BABIE (*aside*). I wonder if mamma suspects.

MRS. W. (*sits soft; signs to BABIE, who comes R.*). Listen to me, Babie. You are no longer a child.

BABIE (*going R. and sitting*). Why do you always call me Babie, then, mamma?

MRS. W. You are my baby, darling. (*Kisses him.*) And so, when you have any mending to do, tell me, and I will give it to Susan myself. It isn't proper for a young woman to be coming at all hours into a young man's room.

BABIE. What harm is there in it, mamma?

MRS. W. There isn't any in this case, but — (*Aside.*) How innocent he is, the poor dear!

BABIE. Then, shall I tell Susan not to come here any more?

MRS. W. (*rising*). I'll attend to that. (*Goes behind table.*)

BABIE (*rising, and coming L.*). (*Aside.*) If mamma only knew what a service she was rendering me!

CHARLIE (*outside 2 E. R.*). Are you there, Harry?

BABIE (*up R.*). Ah! here's Charlie.

MRS. W. And every thing in disorder! (*Arranges table.*)
(*Enter CHARLIE and CRAM.*)

CHARLIE (*shaking hands*). I met Cram coming in — (*Sees MRS. W.*)

MRS. W. Come in, gentlemen, come in.

(*CHARLIE and BABIE converse up C., CRAM down C.*)

CRAM. Good-morning, Mrs. Ward. (*Aside.*) I wonder if she is to assist at the lesson.

MRS. W. (*going L.*). Gentlemen, I leave you to your studies. (*CHARLIE and CRAM bow. BABIE goes L., and embraces her.*) Mr. Cram, I rely on you to make this big boy of mine work. (*At 1 E. L.*)

CRAM. Madam, you can depend upon me. (*Goes up behind table.*)

MRS. W. But without fatiguing him.

CRAM. Exactly. (*Aside.*) I think there's little danger.

MRS. W. (*to BABIE*). Study hard, now, dear. (*Exit 1 E. L. CHARLIE down to L. of table.*)

CRAM (*sits at back, taking book from pocket*). Now, gentlemen.

CHARLIE (*L. of table*). You're a deuce of a man: you agree to meet me and Annie at Aurelia's house —

BABIE (*coming to R. of table*). But I couldn't, you see —

CRAM. Are we ready?

BABIE. Quite. (*They sit. BABIE offers cigars.*) Have a weed, Cram?

CRAM. Never, — never during business hours. (*Puts cigar in pocket.*) We will begin with Chapter IX., concerning paternal authority.

BABIE. Here goes for paternal authority! (*Takes pen and paper.*)

CRAM. "Article 374."

BABIE (*writing*). "Article 374."

CHARLIE (*writing*). "Article 374."

BABIE (*to CHARLIE*). What did she say to my letter?

CHARLIE. She called you a little duck.

BABIE. Did she, though?

(*CRAM rises, and goes to bookcase.*)

CHARLIE. Oh! she wasn't at all angry; for, at the same time you sent your excuse, some other fellow wrote to ask her to supper.

BABIE. So she lost nothing, after all. I feel relieved. (*To CRAM.*) What are you waiting for, Cram?

CRAM. For you to get through.

BABIE. Why, this won't prevent our listening.

CRAM (*sitting at back of table as before*). Very well: "Article 374."

BABIE. "Article 374."

CHARLIE. "Article 374." Have you found any way to get out this evening?

CRAM. "A child cannot leave his father's house without his father's permission, except for voluntary enlistment."

CHARLIE (*writing*). "Voluntary enlistment."

BABIE (*writing*). "Voluntary enlistment." (*To CHARLIE.*) I had a perfectly immense time yesterday. You see, my cousin Skelter has brought his wife here with him. — you remember I told you about her, — and so I must naturally set every thing else aside.

CHARLIE. I say, old man, it isn't the correct thing.

(*CRAM sits R. sofa.*)

BABIE. I don't see why not.

CRAM. Nor I.

BABIE. What's that?

CRAM (*rising, and going L.*). Nothing, nothing. (*Aside.*) And his mother believes him! Ah! they are all alike, — mothers. (*Aloud.*) "Article 375." (*By piano.*)

BABIE *and* CHARLIE. "Article 375."

BABIE (*to* CHARLIE). And you, what have you been doing?

CHARLIE. Why, I dined with Annie; but she left me at dessert. I was rather glad of it, for there was that little actress; and, hang it! you know a fellow don't want to miss that.

BABIE. Certainly not.

CRAM (*putting book on piano, aside*). I should like to see her myself.

CHARLIE. She's awfully swell, old fellow, awfully swell. Mlle. Lisette —

CRAM (*crosses R. quickly*). Mlle. Lisette? why, I know her. Ten years ago —

BABIE. You, Cram?

CRAM. By sight, only by sight. (*Goes back to book open on piano*.) As I was saying, "Article 375."

BABIE. Go on, go on, Cram: we are listening.

CRAM. You know, if this bores you —

BABIE. Not at all. (*To* CHARLIE.) And how was the new burlesque?

CHARLIE. Not good for much; but the chorus, — ah! you should have seen them. We went round to the stage-door to meet them; but waited half an hour, by mistake, in the back doorway of a saloon, until the proprietor put us out. (*CRAM laughs*.)

BABIE. Hard luck. (*Hearing* CRAM.) Sh! that's mother's voice. (*Seeing* CRAM.) Why, no: it's Cram. What's the row, Cram?

CRAM (*seriously*). Nothing. (*Reads*.) "Article 375. A father who finds grave faults in the conduct of his son, can have the following means of correction: first, imprisonment" —

BABIE. Oh, what rot! And after the theatre, what then?

CHARLIE. Oh! we finished the evening about town generally. Some of the crowd were rather full; but most of us were straight enough to play a game of billiards. Do you remember, old man, how, three years ago, they wouldn't let us play, because we weren't of age?

CRAM (*reading*). "Any one of feeble mind, even though he be not a minor, should be prohibited" —

CHARLIE. Do you mean me?

CRAM (*showing book*). "Article 498." Shall we go on?

BABIE. Go on, yes: you don't disturb us. What do you do this evening?

CHARLIE. Dine at home. Exciting, eh?

BABIE. I am one of a party of four (*CRAM comes and sits behind table, leaving book on piano*), with cousin Skelter, his lady friend, and mine. Tell mother, you know, we are going to a dinner of the Compressed Guano Company, Limited.

CHARLIE. And the Compressed Guano Company is —

BABIE. Devilish limited. All in my eye, in fact. Limited to four people, but unlimited as to champagne. What fun! Two of the jolliest of girls! (*Up to speech, CRAM comes more and more interested.*)

CRAM. I should like to know them.

BABIE. Good, very good! delicious! Oh, you rascal! (*Gives him a blow which upsets him, chair and all.*) Oh! I beg pardon, Cram. (*BABIE and CHARLIE assist him.*)

CRAM (*rubbing himself*). Come, now, for a sick man — (*Knocking, 2 E. R.*)

CHARLIE. Sh!

BABIE. What's that?

CHARLIE. Somebody knocking. (*Repeated.*)

BABIE. Who's there?

VOICE OF ANNIE. Open the door!

CHARLIE. Annie's voice!

BABIE. Impossible! Cram, go and have a smoke in the bathroom (*pushing him to L.*). We'll resume study by and by.

CRAM. Aren't you going to present me to the ladies?

BABIE. Of course not. Go in. (*Pushes him out 2 E. L.*)

CRAM (*aside*). I must be content with the keyhole, then. (*Bus. of returning for hat and umbrella; finally BABIE locks door.*)

CHARLIE (*at 2 E. R.*). Shall I open?

BABIE (*going 1 E. L.*). Wait wait: till I lock out the governor.

CHARLIE. Push the bolt.

BABIE. Done. (*Goes up C.; CHARLIE opens 2 E. R.*)

AURELIA and ANNIE (*entering*). At last!

BABIE (*C. howing*). Ladies, this is very good of you.

CHARLIE (*R.*). We were so little prepared —

BABIE. For the pleasure of your call —

BOTH. But pray be seated.

ANNIE. Here are manners for you.

AURELIA (C. to **BABIE**). Exquisite, aren't they?

BABIE. We merely conform to the usages of —

CHARLIE. Good society.

AURELIA. I should think so. (**BABIE** and **CHARLIE** embrace them.)

BABIE (down C. with **AURELIA**). But what lucky chance —

AURELIA (interrupting). Oh, how swell you are here! Come, do the honors. (*Drags him up.*)

ANNIE (down L. with **CHARLIE**). We've just come from the photographer's. (*Shows photograph.*)

CHARLIE. Charming!

ANNIE. Is that all? (*To BABIE.*) Look, Harry.

BABIE (down L.). Charming! (*Takes it.*) Thanks. (*Puts it on stand on table R.*) You don't mind my keeping it?

ANNIE. It's about time to ask. (**BABIE** goes up.) A piano! Oh, I do love music! Do you play, Charlie?

CHARLIE. Like the conservatory.

ANNIE (pulling him). Come, then, and give me a lesson. (*They sit at the piano, and during what follows practise "What would Mamma say?"*)

AURELIA (with **BABIE** at bookcase). Oh, see these books! Are they novels? Lend me some, won't you?

BABIE. Novels! What would papa and mamma say?

AURELIA. Papa! mamma! (*Laughing.*) He talks like a speaking doll.

BABIE. Oh! I have some novels. (*Down R., arm in arm.*) But they are locked up. These are law-books.

AURELIA. Ah! you study them. (*Takes book from table.*) The statutes! Where are the laws about divorce? (*Turns over leaves.*)

BABIE. How does that interest you? (*Tries to take it.*)

AURELIA (drawing away). Let me see. (*Goes L.*)

BABIE (after her). You would, would you? (*Tries to take it.*)

AURELIA (L.). Find them for me, Charlie — oh, a piano! (*Drops book.*) Who plays? Come, play us something, Harry.

BABIE (L.). I'm agreeable.

AURELIA. That's modest. (*Making ANNIE rise.*) Come, get up, get up.

ANNIE (rising). Oh, dear! we were getting on so well! (*Goes R. with CHARLIE.*)

BABIE. My latest inspiration. (*Sits, and plays a prelude.*)

ANNIE (*to CHARLIE*). Don't I make a good pupil?

CHARLIE. Excellent. (*Kisses her. They sit R. sofa.*)

AURELIA (*at piano*). Silence!

BABIE. (*Song introduced.*) (*At end BABIE rises, and comes around to AURELIA. Bus. of applause by all.*)

AURELIA. Hasn't he a voice, though? (*They cross to R.*)

ANNIE (*rising*). There! He's through: give me another lesson. (*Goes L.*)

CHARLIE. With pleasure. (*Goes L.; both sit at piano.*)

AURELIA (*R.*). By the by, I forgot —

BABIE (*on sofa L.*). What?

AURELIA (*sitting in his lap*). I can't take supper with you this evening.

BABIE. Oh, hang it!

AURELIA. Impossible! I came to tell you.

BABIE. And I'd gone and made all the arrangements for a party of four, with one of my cousins.

AURELIA. I'm so sorry! But what can I do? I dine with my mother.

BABIE. I didn't know you had one.

AURELIA. It's not from choice, I assure you. (*Rising, to ANNIE.*) Come, now, no more exercises: we must be going.

ANNIE. Too bad! We were getting on so well. (*Rising: goes C.*)

BABIE (*going up C.*). Confound the luck!

(*CHARLIE at piano plays a waltz.*)

AURELIA (*going to BABIE*). Come, a dance, a dance! — Go on, Charlie. (*Waltzing.*)

BABIE. No, no: I don't feel like it.

AURELIA (*down C.*). Well, be sulky if you like. Come, Annie — tra-la-la. (*They waltz; soon BABIE forgets his annoyance, seizes a chair, and waltzes about. A knock 1 E. L. All stop.*)

MR. W. (*outside*). Babie, it is I. Open the door.

BABIE (*C.*). My father! (*General consternation.*)

BABIE (*pointing 2 E. R.*). Go out that way, girls. (*To CHARLIE.*) You fix up the table, old man. (*CHARLIE runs R., BABIE 2 E. L., ANNIE at 2 E., and AURELIA C. Knock 2 E. R.*)

MR. S. (*outside 2 E. R.*). Can I come in?

(*AURELIA and ANNIE scream; 2 E. R. opens, ANNIE hides*)

behind it. AURELIA hides 1 E. R.; CHARLIE *arranging table does not see.*

MR. S. *(entering)*. Where are you all? *(ANNIE escapes 2 E. R., closing door. Knocking at 1 E. L. repeated.)*

MR. S. *(turning, and seeing ANNIE)*. Ho, ho! *(BABIE opens 2 E. L. CRAM tumbles out as if from spying at key-hole.)* Aha! *(BABIE seizes CRAM, and drags him R. to table.)*

CRAM. Easy! you are tearing my coat.

BABIE *(low)*. Keep still, will you! *(Seats him behind table.)* Quick, quick! Let us get to work. *(BABIE and CHARLIE sit as before, and simulate work; knocking 1 E. L.)*

MR. W. *(outside)*. Babie, Babie!

BABIE *(to MR. S.)*. Draw the bolt.

MR. S. *(puzzled, going 1 E. L.)*. What is this all about? *(Draws bolt: enter MR. W., who makes sign of silence; very still.)*

BABIE *(loud)*. "The father who finds cause of complaint" —

CHARLIE *(loud)*. "Ought to be restrained."

CRAM *(low)*. No, no, you're mixing them up.

BABIE *(low)*. What's the odds? *(Aloud.)* "Article 2,009."

CHARLIE. "Article 2,010."

CRAM. Excellent! *(Looking under table.)* Where *(aside)* the deuce are my statutes?

MR. W. *(to MR. S.)*. Sh! Here is a picture of serious and earnest study for you. *(To BABIE.)* You bolted the door so as not to be disturbed? *(Both L.)*

BABIE. Yes, papa.

CRAM *(aside)*. Oh, that's his father, is it? I never saw him before.

BABIE. "Article 3,009."

CHARLIE. "Article 3,010."

CRAM *(low)*. Don't go so fast: there are not so many articles as that.

BABIE *(low voice)*. Never mind.

MR. S. *(cross R.; aside)*. I'm sure there were some women here.

MR. W. *(seeing CRAM'S book on piano.)* Hallo, what are these statutes doing here? *(BABIE and CHARLIE exchange looks.)*

MR. S. They are in a tight place now.

MR. W. And that reminds me, you were having some

music. (*Bus. slipping down in chairs by BABIE and CHARLIE.*)

CRAM (*rising, and coming c.*). I'll explain, Mr. Ward. It is—it is a part of my system. I—I have them sing the words of their lesson in order to fix it more firmly in their minds. I call it musical mnemonics. (*Turns to BABIE, and signals: he and CHARLIE rise and come down.*)

BABIE (*aside*). That's a regular Crammer.

MR. W. Suppose you illustrate, Mr. Cram. (*The three dismayed.*)

CRAM. You—you would like—

BABIE (*aside*). Floored!

MR. W. Yes. I am curious to see—

CRAM (*aside*). I wish he was contented with seeing. (*Consults with boys*)

MR. W. (*showing book*). Don't you change the text at all?

CRAM. Oh, yes! The words must be a trifle modified, of course. (*Boys encourage him.*) But the sense remains the same. (*Taking book.*) For example, "Article 375." Ahem! (*Tries several airs, and finally sings to "O. d. G. rimes is d. ad."*)

CRAM, CHARLIE, BABIE.

"The father who has any cause
Of complaint against his son,
If it be grave can have the right
To have him put in jail."

BABIE (*loud*). Chorus. Now, then—

ALL.

"To have him put in jail, my boys,
To have him put in jail,
If it be grave can have the right
To have him put in jail."

MR. W. Good very good. (*They congratulate one another.*) Now try this one. (*D. snay id. round.*)

CRAM (*aside*). More! O Lord!

MR. W. "Article 374."

CRAM (*after thought, to the tune "Upidee" sings*).

"A child can't leave his father's house"—

ALL.

"Up-dee, upida."

CRAM.

"Without the leave of his papa"—

ALL.

"Upidee-i-da."

CRAM (*hesitating*).

"Without it be — without it be for voluntary enlist-ment,"

BABIE (*loudly*).

"Upidee-i-dee-i-da, upidee," &c.

(*But is checked by CHARLIE.*)

MR. W. Excellent!

MR. S. (R.). Very ingenious, certainly.

CRAM (*wiping forehead; aside*). It certainly was. (*Goes back to table with boys.*)

MR. W. (*going R.*). Ah! since my time education has made great progress.

BABIE. Let us go on with our work, Cram. (*Aside.*) Don't give him time to ask for a third. (*Aloud.*) "Article 6,000."

CHARLIE. "Article 6,010."

BABIE. "Article 10,627."

CHARLIE. "Article 11,565."

CRAM (*low*). Easy, easy: it sounds improbable.

MR. W. (R.). Are they so far advanced in the statutes? You ought to be satisfied with my son, Mr. Cram.

CRAM. Satisfied! I am more than satisfied. (*Aside.*) That is, I've had more than enough of him.

MR. W. (*to BABIE.*). Persevere, my boy, persevere as you have begun. (*To MR. S.*) But I forget. Your wife is up stairs waiting for you. (*Goes up C.*)

BABIE (*aside*). My cousin back! (*To CRAM.*) Say the lesson is over.

CRAM (*aside*). With pleasure. (*Aloud, looking at watch.*) Gentlemen, your time is up; you are at liberty. (*Rises, and goes up C.*)

BABIE. Thank you, Mr. Cram. (*Low to CHARLIE.*) I say, we got out of that nicely. (*Down C.*)

CHARLIE. I believe you. (*Up C.*)

SKELTER (*to BABIE, low*). The room is engaged, and the supper ordered.

BABIE. Only, unfortunately, my friend can't come.

MR. S. Well, then, I'll run and tell 'em there will only be two. Wait a minute. I'll be back directly. (*Exit 2 E. R.*)

BABIE. No hurry. (*Aside.*) If my cousin should happen to be alone. (*Exit 1 E. L.*)

MR. W. (*at back*). To-morrow, I believe. We mustn't let their ardor cool.

CRAM. Oh! their ardor is not of a kind which cools so easily. (*Bowing.*) Good-morning, Mr. Ward. (*Exit, with CHARLIE R. & 2 E.*) (*Aside.*) I ought to have told his mother, six months or ten years.

MR. W. (*down L. to SUSAN, who enters I E. L. with linen.*) What have you there?

SUSAN (*going R.*). Master Harry's linen.

MR. W. Oh! (*Exit I E. L., singing*)—
 "If it be grave can have the right
 To have him put in jail."

SUSAN (R.). I wonder if missus suspected any thing. She told me not to come here any more when Master Harry was here, but I shall in spite of her. (*Puts thimble in tobacco-jar.*) Didn't I come to look for my thimble? (*Opens I E. R.; sees AURELIA, screams, and drops basket.*) A woman!

AURELIA (*entering*). Sh! Keep still!

SUSAN (*aside*). A woman in Babie's room! (*Aloud.*) What does this mean?

AURELIA. Sh! (*Offers money.*) Here is something for you.

SUSAN. Money! What is that for?

AURELIA. To keep still about—

SUSAN. Are you Madame Aurelia?

AURELIA. You know my name.

SUSAN (*aside*). It is she. (*Aloud.*) Oh, yes! I know you. And you dare to come here?

AURELIA. What do you mean, girl?

SUSAN. You dare to pursue Babie even in his own house.

AURELIA. Well, upon my word!

SUSAN. Oh, they have no shame, these women!

AURELIA. Will you let me pass?

SUSAN. Never!

AURELIA. By what right do you forbid me?

SUSAN. As the representative of his family.

AURELIA. Upon my soul, I admire the interest you take in him; but I suspect—

MR. S. (*entering 2 E. R.*). I haven't been very long (C., *seeing AURELIA*). Hallo!

AURELIA (R., *aside*). Heavens! My friend from the country!

SUSAN. A likely story.

AURELIA (*low*). Hush! he'll kill you.

(SUSAN *alarmed*.)

MR. S. (*down C.*). Aurelia!

AURELIA. Well.

MR. S. Pray explain matters.

AURELIA. Explain what?

MR. S. What? Your presence here, for instance.

AURELIA. Nothing more easy. I was passing here, and saw you come out of this house.

MR. S. When?

SUSAN (*low*). Ten minutes ago.

AURELIA. Scarcely ten minutes ago. I called, but you didn't answer me.

MR. S. I heard nothing.

AURELIA. Then a suspicion occurs to my mind. I say to myself, He comes here to see some woman. I ring. I ask the servant, From whence did that gentleman come? He says, From the ground-floor. I rush to the door—

SUSAN. I opened the door.

AURELIA. And told me that you lived here. That's all. (*Cross to L.*)

SUSAN. That's all. (*Aside.*) Ah, if Babie only knew! (*Up R.*)

MR. S. (*C.*) This is possible.

AURELIA. Possible? Why, what did you suspect?

MR. S. Nothing, nothing; but you have acted very imprudently. (*To R.*) Susan, I rely on your discretion.

SUSAN. Trust me, sir. (*Down L.; aside.*) The horrid thing! I must get Babie out of her clutches. (*Exit 1 E. L.*)

MR. S. (*up C.*). And now lose no time in getting away.

AURELIA (*cross to R. 2 E.*). Until this evening.

BABIE (*behnd 2 E. R.*). You can come in, cousin.

MR. S. My wife! You can't get out there. Come, quick! (*Hurries her to 2 E. L., locks door, pocket key, runs down, and reads statutes L. of table*) Now they can come.

MRS. S. (*entering with MRS. W. and BABIE*). Ah! you here, Skelton?

MR. S. (*buttoning duster to conceal dress*). Yes, my dear: I—

BABIE. And the ladies have been awaiting you up-stairs. What have you been doing?

MR. S. I was looking for the statutes relating to agriculture.

BABIE (*aside*). Cram's book! He has forgotten it.
 MRS. W. (*down R. on sofa*). Always occupied with agriculture.

BABIE (C.). (*Low*.) And the ladies?

MR. S. (*squirms*). (*Low*.) Shut up!

MRS. S. (L.). And so, Babie, this is your study?

BABIE (*to her*). Yes, cousin.

MRS. W. The temple of research and improvement.

MR. S. (*aside*). Are they never going away?

MRS. S. (*to him*). By the way, have you been to the school to tell them I sha'n't dine there till to-morrow?

MR. S. (*rising*). Dear me! I had forgotten. I beg pardon. (*Signs to BABIE.*)

MRS. S. Oh! I'm used to it. Every time I give you a commission you forget it.

MRS. W. Well, go now, and repair the oversight.

MR. S. But — (*As.de.*) Oh, Lord! and she in there! (*Down C.*)

MRS. S. Certainly: there's not an instant to be lost.

BABIE. Better go now.

MR. S. Why, you see — (*Aside.*) If I could only warn Babie!

MRS. S. And meet us at half-past two at the fair, where —

MR. S. Oh! you're going out?

MRS. S. Immediately: we have some errands to do. Be quick.

MR. S. I'll go. (*Aside; up C.*) I've locked her in safely: I can easily come back, and let her out. (*Exit 2 E.R.*)

MRS. S. You live like a prince here, Babie.

BABIE. You think so?

MRS. S. One sees a mother's hand here. (*To Mrs. W.*) Ah! you are spoiling him.

MRS. W. He is the only one I have.

MRS. S. I didn't mean to reproach you. Really all these ornaments are very tasteful.

BABIE. Ah! they are all of my choosing.

MRS. S. (*cross R. to table*). And what a pretty tobacco-jar! (*Takes out thimble.*) Oh, see! a thimble.

BABIE (*aside*). The deuce!

MRS. W. Susan's thimble! (*This aside.*) (*Aloud.*) Yes; I know. (*As.de.*) Here again: I must see about this. (*Crosses L.*)

BABIE (*cross R. to MRS. S., low*). I shall always cherish these things.

MRS. S. Why, pray?

BABIE. Because you have touched them.

MRS. S. Do be still! What if any one overheard you?
(*Goes L. to MRS. W.*)

BABIE (*aside*). If I could only get rid of mamma! (*Seizing flask from table*.) The very thing! (*Puts it in pocket, and sits R. on sofa.*)

MRS. W. (*near E. L., pointing*). Yes, there's his bedroom, and there his bathroom.

BABIE (*hand on stomach*). Oh-h-h!

MRS. W. (*running R. with MRS. S.*). Oh, heavens! he is ill.

MRS. S. You are in pain?

BABIE (*indicating*). Yes: here. Oh-h!

MRS. W. Shall I call a doctor?

BABIE. No, no: only a little brandy.

MRS. S. Yes; a few drops on a lump of sugar. Quick!

MRS. W. (*running to table; searching*). There is always a flask here. Where can it be?

BABIE. Oh, I don't know! (*Aside, showing flask.*) I hope you may find it.

MRS. W. Susan has carried it away, no doubt.

BABIE (*aside*). Poor Susan!

MRS. W. Never mind. I'll go and fetch mine. (*Goes L.*)

BABIE. Do, please. Oh-h!

MRS. W. I'll be back in a jiffy. (*Exit E. L.*)

BABIE (*rising*). Pray don't hurry. (*Goes L.*)

MRS. S. Why, Babie! Are you better?

BABIE (*back to her*). At last I have you alone.

MRS. S. What does this mean?

BABIE. That my flask is here, and that my illness was only a ruse to be alone with you.

MRS. S. O Babie!

BABIE. No, not Babie. Babie to mamma, Babie to your husband: they won't distrust me then. But to you—

MRS. S. (*aside*). I'm afraid of him.

BABIE. Ah, cousin (*embracing her*). I love you. I never loved any one but you. I never shall—

MRS. S. (*getting away to c.*). Let me go. You are mad!

BABIE (c.). I shall be if you don't listen to me.

MRS. S. But my husband.

BABIE. Don't talk about him. Let us talk about yourself — so beautiful, so good, so adorable!

MRS. S. O Harry! what if he should return?

BABIE. But he's at that school, so never mind him. You whom cruel fate has united to a being so incapable of appreciating you, of understanding you. (*Embraces her.*)

MRS. S. I implore you! (*Struggles.*)

BABIE. Yes, incapable (*kisses her*), while I (*kisses her*) — yes, I (*again*) —

MRS. S. (*aside*). What shall I do?

BABIE. Ah, cousin! if you were real good now, you would meet me at four this afternoon, behind —

MRS. S. I —

BABIE. Yes, you. You would find there a carriage, and in the carriage a young man.

MRS. S. O Babie! (*Tries to get away.*)

BABIE (*kissing her*). Is it yes?

CRAM (*entering, 2 E. R.*). I left my book here. (*Seeing them.*) Oh — I — pardon. (*Faces wall.*)

MRS. S. (*scream, and exit 1 E. R.*).

BABIE. Cram! How the devil came you here?

CRAM. I beg pardon. If I had only known! (*Down c.*)

BABIE (*aside*). Luckily he don't know her.

CRAM. Another time draw the bolt when she is here.

BABIE. Who?

CRAM. Your young lady there.

BABIE. Oh! you take this person for —

CRAM. For the one you would not present me to a while ago.

BABIE (*aside*). Well, let him think so: better he should not know her.

CRAM. If you will allow me, I'll look for my statutes.

BABIE (*aside*). I must get him out of here directly, for if he remains she will never consent. (*Aloud, pushing him R.*) Oblige me, Cram, by getting in here for a moment. (*To closet between doors R.*)

CRAM. I!

BABIE. Yes, and don't come out till I call you. (*Pushes.*)

CRAM. But I'm in a hurry.

BABIE. Only a minute. (*Pushes.*)

CRAM (*resisting*). Brr! It's dark.

BABIE. What of it?

CRAM. Perhaps there are rats.

BABIE (*pushing him in, and shutting door*). Hang it, go in. (*Going* 1 E. R.) Poor thing! (*Opens door*.) Come, quick!

MR. S. (*entering* 2 E. R.). All clear!

BABIE (*aside*). Her husband! (*Shuts* 1 E. R. *violently*.)

MR. S. (*down* C. *with* BABIE, *low*). Is your mother gone out?

BABIE. Yes.

MR. S. We must get her out immediately, then.

BABIE. Whom?

MR. S. The woman who is hidden here.

BABIE (*aside, terrified*). O Lord!

MR. S. (*pointing* 1 E. L.). Draw the bolt.

BABIE. But, cousin, you are deceived. There is no woman here.

MR. S. I know better.

BABIE. I'll swear there isn't!

MR. S. Oh, this is too much!

BABIE. What shall I do?

MR. S. (*showing key* 2 E. L., *unobserved*). I know she can't have got out.

BABIE (*falling in terror on sofa*, R.). He knows all.

MRS. W. 1 E. L. (*outside*). It is I, Babie. (*Knocks*.)

BABIE. Mamma?

MR. S. Your mother. Not a word. (*Up* C.)

MRS. W. (*enters with tumbler, followed by* MR. W.). I'm so sorry to have kept you waiting. My flask was locked up, and I could not find the keys. (*Goes* R.)

MR. W. (*with hat on, and papers*, L.). You don't feel well, my boy.

BABIE. No, papa.

MR. S. (*up* C.). Then that is why you had such a disturbed air when —

BABIE. Yes, cousin.

MR. W. Oh! it's nothing but a cramp. (*Sits on piano-stool* L., *and reads*.)

MRS. W. What a father! (*Gives* BABIE *the glass*.) There, dear, drink that.

BABIE. With pleasure. (*Aside*.) I really need it.

MRS. W. Why, Mrs. Skelter has gone!

BABIE (*rising*). Yes, long ago, a long time ago. (*Low*) Take away Mr. Skelter. (MR. S. *is looking toward 2 E. L.*)

MRS. W. (*low*). Take away Mr. Skelter?

BABIE. Yes, yes. Get him away at once, I beg of you.

MRS. W. Why?

BABIE. I'll tell you later. (*Goes up.*)

MRS. W. What difference — (BABIE *up R. signals.*) Cousin I have something to tell you.

MR. S. (*down C.*). To me?

MRS. W. If you will come with me.

MR. S. (*aside*). Hang the luck! (*Aloud.*) Nothing pressing, I suppose.

MRS. W. (*at sign from BABIE*). On the contrary, it is urgent. (*Takes his arm.*)

MR. S. (*aside*). Can she have suspected?

MRS. W. (*aside*). If I could only think of something to tell him!

MR. S. (*aside*). I'll get her on the stairs, and then return and liberate Aurelia. (*They go L.*)

MRS. W. What shall I say to him? (*Exeunt 1 E. L.*)

BABIE (*aside*). At last! now for papa. (*Aloud.*) I'm waiting for you, papa. (*Down L.*)

MR. W. (*seated*). Wait till I've finished my paper.

BABIE. No, no, come now. I want to take the air. (*Taking arm.*) I'll walk with you to your club.

MR. W. But — (*Dragged by BABIE.*) Oh, well! (*They go up R.*)

BABIE (*aside*). I'll leave him in the street, and return and liberate Mrs. Skelter. (*Exeunt 2 E. R.*)

CRAM (*opening closet-door*). He has forgotten me. (1 E. L. *opens.*) Here they are again! (*Shuts closet.*)

MR. S. (*entering 1 E. L., bolts it, and goes 2 E. L.*). I told her I'd forgotten my hat. Poor Aurelia!

BABIE (*entering 2 E. R., shuts door*). I told him I'd forgotten my handkerchief. Poor Diana! (*Goes 1 E. R.*)

(*All this in whispers.*)

MRS. S. (*opening 1 E. R.*). I don't hear any one. (*Comes out a step*)

MR. S. (*opening 2 E. L.*). Come out. (*Whispers.*)

BABIE (*down R., sees MR. S.*). Good Lord!

MR. S. (*hearing*). No, don't come out. (*Shuts door 2 E. L., and does not lock it.*)

MRS. S. (*seeing him*). My husband! (*Sinks on sofa*.)

MR. S. My wife! Hang the luck!

BABIE (C.). I alone am to blame.

MR. S. (*aside, down L.*). Good, good! (*Low to BABIE*.)
That's right: stick to it.

BABIE. What!

(*MRS. S. weeps.*)

MR. S. (*going R.*). Very well, madam; since he alone is
to blame —

MRS. S. He? To blame?

MR. S. What! Did you think it was I — I? O Diana!

MRS. S. (*aside*). What does this mean?

MR. S. (*low, to BABIE*). Say something, can't you?
(*Aloud.*) You understand me, don't you? I got his parents
out of the way, so as to get a chance to let her out.

BABIE (*aside*). What is he saying?

MRS. S. Let whom out?

MR. S. The young lady in there.

BABIE (*aside*). There is another woman here, then.

MRS. S. What young lady?

MR. S. (*lower; hesitating*). A — a friend of Babie's.

MRS. S. (*rising*). Of Babie's?

BABIE. Oh! come now —

MR. S. (*cross C.; low*). Keep still! I'll make it all right.

MRS. S. (*hearing*). What do you say?

MR. S. (*embarrassed*). I — my dear — nothing.

MRS. S. (*aside*). What can be the matter with him?

MR. S. (*to BABIE, low*). Get my wife away.

BABIE (*surprised*). I — I get her away?

MRS. S. (*cross L.*). Ah! you wish him to —

MR. S. (*much embarrassed*). For his own good, my dear.
If his father or mother should surprise him here with — you
understand; so you see, I, who am entirely disinterested —

MRS. S. Oh! you are —

MR. S. Of course: you know I care for nothing but
agriculture.

MRS. S. (*aside*). This confusion! This embarrassment!
It is undoubtedly my husband's friend, whom he is trying to
put on poor Babie's back. Oh, I'll be revenged!

BABIE (*at sign from MR. S.*). Come, cousin. (*Goes L.;
low.*) At four o'clock, corner of — (*Whispers.*)

MRS. S. (*taking arm*). (*Low.*) Yes. (*Looks at MR. S.*)

BABIE (*aside*). Victory!

MR. W. (*entering* 2 E. R.). Well, Babie.

MR. S. (*aside*; C.). Will they never get out?

BABIE. I'm coming. (*Aside*.) She's mine. (*Exeunt* 1 E. L.)

MR. S. (*aside*). How can I get him out?

MR. W. Are you coming?

MR. S. Go on! go on! I'll be with you directly. (*Goes up* C.; MR. W. *exit* 2 E. R.)

CRAM (*entering from cupboard*). He must have forgotten me. (*Goes* C.)

MR. S. (*seeing him*). The tutor! It seems to rain men here. (*Down* C.)

CRAM (*aside*). Hallo! the cousin.

MR. S. Mr. Cram, there is a lady in that room. (*Points* 2 E. L.)

CRAM. Pardon me: in this one. (1 E. R.)

MR. S. No; here. (2 E. L.)

CRAM. Pardon me: there. (1 E. R.)

MR. S. I tell you —

CRAM. Well, well; have it your own way.

MR. S. Will you have the goodness to take her out, and put her in a cab?

CRAM. Pardon me: who is to pay — (MR. S. *gives money*.) With pleasure.

AURELIA (*opening* 2 E. L.; *aside*). I don't hear any one. (*Sees* CRAM.) Cram here! (*Lowers veil; crosses; exit* 2 E. R., *brushing* MR. W., *who enters same time*.)

MR. W. Hallo, I say! Who's that?

MR. S. AND CRAM (*exchange looks; together*). A — a lady — friend of Babie's.

MR. W. Babie's? Babie's? What would his mother say? (*Sinks in arm-chair* C.)

MR. S. Well, Ward, what do you say? It's hard, I know; but who's right? The second phase: the widows.

CRAM. Oh! it's a widow, is it? (*Aside*.) Well, for a young man of pure and unsullied character he leaves much to be desired.

ACT III.

SCENE. — *Same as Act I.*

SUSAN (*entering I E. R. with photo.*). This is what you get by rummaging in a bachelor's room. This morning I found a live woman (C.), and just now a photographic one; a blonde this time. That makes two, without counting me. (L.) Ah! I ought—but no: I don't dare. Ah, here is his mother. (*Puts photo in pocket.*)

MRS. W. (*entering D. in F. with Mrs. S.*). Yes, my dear Diana, when these men take us anywhere, they always leave us on some pretext or other. But we need not worry; my husband goes to his eternal club, and yours to the Compressed Guano Company. (*Down C.*)

MRS. S. (R., *aside.*) Yes: a company with a bustle and chignon.

(SUSAN *up L.*)

MRS. W. Don't go away, Susan: I have something to say to you. Tell me, cousin, did you notice a little while ago how agitated Babie was?

MRS. S. No.

MRS. W. I don't know what had happened, but I have my suspicions. Oh, if you would only consent to his marriage with Matilda!

MRS. S. Don't think of it. He is much too young.

SUSAN (*aside.*) Oh, yes: much!

MRS. W. Too young!

MRS. S. And moreover, I dare say he has other plans for himself.

MRS. W. What makes you think so?

MRS. S. Oh, nothing in particular! (*Going I E. L.*) We'll talk about it by and by.

MRS. W. Why not now?

MRS. S. (L.). I am obliged to go out again.

MRS. W. (R.). Ah!

MRS. S. Yes: I must go to my milliner's about some alterations in the bonnet she sent me this morning.

MRS. W. But you seem agitated, Diana.

MRS. W. I'm a little nervous: that's all. (*Aside.*) Ah, Mr. Skelter! you practise agriculture with other women, do you? (*Exit I E. L.*)

MRS. S. (R.). Now we are alone. (*To SUSAN.*) Come here, miss.

SUSAN (*aside*). Miss! (*Down c.*)

MRS. W. (*producing thimble*). Do you recognize this thimble?

SUSAN. Why, you gave it me yourself, last Christmas, as a present!

MRS. W. I found it in my son's tobacco-jar.

SUSAN. Oh, yes! I know—

MRS. W. And, this discovery confirming certain suspicions of mine, I shall be obliged to dispense with your services. (*Cross L. to sofa, and sits.*)

SUSAN (*cross R.*). Oh, ma'am! you wouldn't send me away for a thimble?

MRS. W. A thimble in my son's tobacco-jar,—that is the point. I fear that the poor child, despite the firmness of his principles—

SUSAN (*aside*). I won't be sent away! (*Aloud.*) You won't see that it was all done for your benefit.

MRS. W. What benefit is it to me that—

SUSAN. Easy enough. One has to search for what one has lost; and, in hunting, one often finds what one is not looking for, ma'am.

MRS. W. So you have been playing the spy on Babie?

SUSAN. For his good.

MRS. W. And you have discovered—

SUSAN. That he is in a fair way to disgrace himself.

MRS. W. (*rising*). Babie? Disgrace himself?

SUSAN. Mr. Ward was so imprudent as to fit up the ground-floor for him.

MRS. W. To give him better opportunities for study.

SUSAN. To let him go out nights after the lights are out.

MRS. W. To see his sick horse.

SUSAN. Oh, yes; his horse!

MRS. W. He has no other pets.

SUSAN. Women.

MRS. W. Babie goes to see women!

SUSAN. And they return his visits.

MRS. W. Susan! I'll not believe it. (*Cross L. to table.*)

SUSAN (*cross R.*). No later than yesterday I found one in his room, — a Miss Aurelia.

MRS. W. You saw her?

SUSAN. Face to face.

MRS. W. Oh, my poor Babie! Who would have believed it?

SUSAN (*aside*). I would.

MRS. W. Is she pretty?

SUSAN. Oh, yes!

MRS. W. (*up R.*). This is awful.

SUSAN. So it is, ma'am. And that isn't all.

MRS. W. (*down C.*). What, more!

SUSAN. She is Mr. Skelter's friend as well.

MRS. W. Mr. Skelter's!

SUSAN. And he is fierce as a lion, he is: if he knew that Master Harry —

MRS. W. (*R.*). This is frightful! We must at any cost —

SUSAN. But how?

MRS. W. That's it, how? You see, I'm not used to these things. This is the first time —

SUSAN. Suppose we ask Mr. Ward.

MRS. W. No, no! He'd laugh at me. I have so often vouched for Babie's innocence before him. And then, poor man, he is so incapable.

SUSAN. What's to be done, then?

MRS. W. (*sitting at table R.*). I have it! Yes — this is the very thing. (*Writes.*)

SUSAN. And am I to go away, ma'am?

MRS. W. (*writing*). No! I'll double your wages.

SUSAN. Oh, thank you, ma'am!

MRS. W. (*writing address*). Your conduct is worthy of encouragement. Persevere. (*Rising, and giving letter.*) Tell John to carry this to Mr. Cram's; and be quick.

SUSAN (*up C.*). Yes, ma'am. Ah! here is Master Harry. (*Aside.*) Yes, I'll do all I can to save him, never fear. (*Exit D. in F., allowing BABIE to enter first.*)

BABIE (*aside*). The hour of my appointment approaches, and I haven't a cent to pay the carriage. Charlie and Annie have eaten up my dictionaries. What's to be done? (*Down C.*)

MRS. W. (*aside*). He looks guilty. (*To C., aloud.*) Unhappy child!

BABIE. What, mamma?

MRS. W. (*seeing* MR. W.). Hush! your father.

MR. W. (*entering* 2 E. L., *aside*). Here he is. (*Aloud.*)
Aha, you rascal!

BABIE. Well, papa.

MR. W. (L., *seeing* MRS. W.). No. Not before your mother.

BABIE (*aside*). What the deuce is up now, I wonder!

MR. W. (*aside*). It wouldn't be the correct thing. (*Aloud.*)
I think you said you were going out, Mrs. Ward.

MRS. W. Oh, no! I thought you were.

MR. W. Not I. I've just come from reading the morning papers at the club, and sha'n't go back till the evening ones come out.

MRS. W. (R., *aside*). What a father! Oh, if he didn't always have his nose in a paper!

MR. W. (L.). You were saying —

MRS. W. Nothing. I'm going out. (*Aside.*) Once married happily! (*Exit* 2 E. L.)

BABIE (C. to R.). I ought (*aside*) to be keeping my appointment with my cousin. If I could only raise some out of father!

MR. W. Come here, sir! I want to have a little serious talk with you.

BABIE (*to* L., *aside*). This doesn't sound very promising.

MR. W. So, my luck. (*Aside.*) No, that style won't do. (*Aloud.*) Now, look a-here, Babie. (*Aside.*) That's not severe enough: I can do it better seated. (*Sits on sofa* L., *aloud.*) Young man, I — (*At a loss.*)

BABIE (*aside*). What is to pay now?

MR. W. (*rising, aside*). After all, this is more imposing.

BABIE. Well, papa?

MR. W. Oh, yes! (*Aside.*) It is more difficult than I thought. Ah, this is it. (*Aloud.*) I certainly am not a father —

BABIE. You are not a father, papa!

MR. W. Listen to me, sir. I am not a father — (*Aside.*)
How shall I say it?

BABIE. I can help you. You are not a generous father.

MR. W. None of your impertinence, sir. At last, m-m — (*Aside.*) This will do. (*Aloud.*) So, you scapegrace, your moon is at the full, eh?

BABIE. Moon!

MR. W. Don't pretend innocence. The second phase. I know all. (*Crosses R.*)

BABIE (*L., aside*). Discovered! (*Aloud.*) What all do you know, papa?

MR. W. All about that woman.

BABIE (*aside*). Can Diana have discovered herself?

MR. W. About Aurelia, as she calls herself.

BABIE. Ah, Aurelia! (*Aside.*) I breathe again. His all is only a third part. (*Aloud.*) And you allow that to annoy you?

MR. W. Well, I like that.

BABIE. But, papa, I am twenty-two, and at that age—

MR. W. No age excuses such conduct. And your examinations—

BABIE. Oh! I shall pass them.

MR. W. You never can win fame dawdling in my lady's chamber.

BABIE. But I don't expect—

MR. W. (*R.*). But I do, sir. Work hard when you are young, if you wish to achieve renown in your age.

BABIE (*L.*). Well, papa, you know you are not renowned, and so—

MR. W. Oh! I'm no model for you.

BABIE. Ah! I know that when you were a young fellow, you—

• MR. W. Never!

BABIE. Oh, papa! they talk about it now, and—

MR. W. Oh! they talk of it, eh? (*Chuckles.*)

BABIE. Yes, indeed, and—

MR. W. You are talking nonsense, sir. Then I was not your father, but now you are my son. (*Cross L.*)

BABIE (*cross R.*). Why, then, since I am your son, why can't I do as you used to do when you were not my father?

MR. W. Do you dare bandy words with me, sir? This is the result of modern education.

CRAM (*entering D. in F.*). Why, gentlemen, what is the matter? (*Down C.*)

BABIE (*to him C.*). Cram, papa forbids my falling in love.

CRAM. That's very severe.

MR. W. (*dragging him L.*). See here, Mr. Cram, you are a man of principle: tell me if I am too harsh.

CRAM. I shall take pleasure —

MR. W. This boy, then, instead of pegging away at his books, has been making a fool of himself over women. Naturally, I don't like this. Now, do try and make him listen to reason.

CRAM. That presents no difficulty. (*Cross to BABIE extreme R.*)

BABIE (*low to him*). What did papa say?

CRAM (*partially audible to MR. W.*). He says, study the statutes, and don't make a fool of yourself.

BABIE. Oh! that's very well, but a fellow can't always be tied to his mother's apron-strings.

CRAM. That's very true.

BABIE. Tell him so, then.

CRAM. No difficulty. (*Goes extreme L. to MR. W.*)

MR. W. (*low*). Well?

CRAM. He says he don't want to be always tied to his mother's apron-strings.

MR. W. Oh! well, if he'll promise not to associate with these women, I'll allow him a certain freedom.

CRAM. Precisely. (*To extreme R.*)

BABIE. Well?

CRAM. He says he'll allow you a certain freedom in the way of associating with these women.

BABIE. But that's all I ask. (*Going L.*) Ah, papa! that's very good of you; and, in return, I'll pledge myself not to flunk a single examination.

MR. W. If I thought you wouldn't, I'd —

BABIE. Only, papa, to do that, you must increase my allowance a little.

MR. W. Well, well. Only look to your behavior. (*Going C.*) Mr. Cram, how much ought a young man to decently spend on modest pleasures? (*BABIE L. signals.*)

CRAM (*to C.*). I think that with (*observes signals*) fifty dollars a —

MR. W. Yes, yes, here are twenty-five.

BABIE (*to C.*). Yes, papa, but Cram said fifty, — fifty. (*Shows on fingers.*)

MR. W. (*counting*). Ten, twenty, twenty-five; but I want a strict account of your expenses.

BABIE. Yes, papa. (*Goes up, aside.*) At last I have something to pay for the carriages. (*Looks at watch.*) By Jove! nearly four. (*Goes.*)

MR. W. Where are you going?

BABIE. To look over my lesson with Charlie: he expects me. (*Winks.*) By-by, Cram. (*Aside.*) What luck! in a quarter of an hour I'll be with her.

(*Exit R. I E. CRAM R.*)

MR. W. (*to L.*). I hope now to be undisturbed.

MRS. W. (*outside*). How, Mr. Cram here!

MR. W. (*L.*). My wife! Don't allude to this before her.

CRAM (*R.*). Mr. Ward, you may rely on me.

MRS. W. (*entering 2 E. L.*). Ah, Mr. Cram, I've been awaiting you so impatiently!

MR. W. (*going up*). I shall have to leave you. I want to send John to buy the evening papers. (*Exit D. in F.*)

MRS. W. (*down L. to sofa, aside*). What a father! (*Aloud.*) Sit down, Mr. Cram. I wish to speak with you concerning my son.

CRAM (*coming L., sits*). Ah?

MRS. W. Alas! I have been very much troubled about him.

CRAM. His health has not appeared to me—

MRS. W. I told you yesterday, I believe, that I delivered him to you pure and unsullied.

CRAM. But, madam, do you not find him to be all you desire?

MRS. W. Oh, these boys! Babies, always babies to us; yet while we see nothing—

CRAM. Their beard is growing apace.

MRS. W. I discovered to-day, Mr. Cram, his connection with a woman, one Miss Aurelia.

CRAM (*aside*). Ah! it was Aurelia. (*Aloud.*) Yes: I met her here in his room this morning. A beautiful and distinguished-looking blonde.

MRS. W. I'm not surprised. He has good taste. the little scapegrace, and then he is so fascinating!

CRAM. And how, madam, can I assist you?

MRS. W. Aid me in getting rid of this woman. For, Mr. Cram, she has a fierce, bloodthirsty lover, who, if he once discovered that Babie was his rival—

CRAM. I must confess, madam, that I am better skilled in instructing young gentlemen in law than in—

MRS. W. At least you can lecture him: I dare not. It is a delicate subject for a mother.

CRAM. Ah! there is nothing too —

MRS. W. Yes, yes. But, if you would be kind enough to hunt up this woman, I am quite sure —

CRAM. I, madam! I never did such a thing. (*Rises.*)

MRS. W. I do not ask you to be at any expense.

CRAM. My means would not permit that. But even if they did —

MRS. W. You need have no fear of compromising yourself in the eyes of your wife, since you have not seen her for two years and a half.

CRAM (*goes R.*). Pardon me, madam: only recently I met her, elegantly dressed, face to face. And this meeting has exasperated me.

MRS. W. Are you sorry you left her?

CRAM. Oh, no! but because I've been paying her two hundred dollars a year.

MRS. W. All the more reason why you should not refuse to perform a service I can so gladly requite.

CRAM. Oh, madam! I assure you personal interest —

MRS. W. I am sure of that. Do you know where she lives?

CRAM. My wife?

MRS. W. No, Miss Aurelia.

CRAM. Oh! I can find out that from my pupils. They all know her. She's particularly fond of law-students. But, madam, once there, what am I to say to her?

MRS. W. Haven't your pupils given you any hints how to proceed?

CRAM. I only know that usually the best arguments with such persons are presents.

MRS. W. (*rising, going to cabinet L.*). Yes, you are right. Here, Mr. Cram, here is all I have left of my housekeeping allowance. (*Down, gives it.*)

CRAM (*rising*). But Mr. Ward —

MRS. W. Oh! I'll starve him into giving more. Why not? He is so stingy! Buy with this a bracelet or locket, and give this Miss Aurelia. Explain to her that it is a parting gift, and beg her, in my name, to leave Babie alone in the future.

CRAM (*pocketing money*). It shall be as you desire. (*Aside, going R.*) I'll make the present in my own name. I can't bear to drag a lady's name into such a transaction. Besides, who knows what may come of it?

MRS. W. (*up L.*). I must leave you, Mr. Gram: make haste, and stop at nothing. (*Exit D. in F.*)

CRAM. You shall be satisfied, madam.

MRS. S. (*entering 1 E. L., aside*). Nobody here. Ah, yes! the tutor,

CRAM (*aside*). Hallo! Aurelia here?

MRS. S. (*to C.*). I beg you, sir, not a word.

CRAM. Unhappy woman! These are sacred thresholds which you ought never to cross.

MRS. S. I don't understand you.

CRAM (*to C.*). All is discovered.

MRS. S. Every thing?

CRAM. Your relations with Master Harry are known.

MRS. S. (*aside*). Heavens! (*10 R.*)

CRAM. His father, mother, every one knows. It's in the papers.

MRS. S. Oh, I shall faint! (*Faints, arm-chair R.*) I'm going —

CRAM. That's just what I want. But I don't want you to go in that way. (*Attending to her.*) Come, be good, go away. You shall be handsomely rewarded.

MRS. S. Rewarded?

CRAM. You'll see, you'll see. But go away. What if any one were to discover you in such a situation?

MRS. S. (*rising*). You are right. I must recover myself.

CRAM. Hallo, here's somebody coming!

(*SKELTER heard outside D. in F.*)

MRS. S. (*aside*). My husband! (*Faints in CRAM'S arms.*)

CRAM (*holding her*). Oh, Lord, here's a fix!

MRS. S. Oh, save me!

CRAM (*running L. with her*). That's not so easy. Ah! the private stair. (*Goes R.*)

MRS. S. No, no, not there!

CRAM. Somebody's coming! Ah, this room! (*Goes L., aside.*) I never would have believed her so cowardly. (*Carries her into 2 E. L.*)

MR. S. (*entering D. in F.*). Aurelia was not at home, at least so her maid told me. (*Down L.*)

CRAM (*re-enters*). Mr. Skelter, you are just in time. (*Down R.*)

MR. S. Why! what's up?

CRAM (*to C.*). Sh! I'll tell you: she is in there.

MR. S. Who is there? (*Comes C.*)

CRAM. Master Harry's friend, who is come here to seek him.

MR. S. There's cheek for you.

CRAM. And, learning that his family knew of their intimacy, she goes and faints away.

MR. S. Really!

CRAM. And I want you to help me get her out.

MR. S. Willingly. Indeed, I'm not sorry to get a chance to see her. (*Goes up L.*)

CRAM. Sh! somebody's coming! (*To R.*)

MR. S. (*to SUSAN, entering D. in F.*). What do you want, Susan?

SUSAN (*with bundles*). I'm bringing these parcels for Mrs. Skelter. (*Goes R., table.*)

MR. S. Has my wife got back?

SUSAN. Yes, sir. (*Goes L.*)

MR. S. (*aside*). This is awkward.

SUSAN (*opening I E. L.*). She's not in her room, though, sir.

MR. S. (*relieved*). Ah! that's better.

SUSAN. Oh! she is probably with Mrs. Ward. (*Up R.*)

CRAM. Mrs. Ward went out there. (*Points 2 E. R.*)

MR. S. Leave us now, Susan, and see that we are not disturbed.

SUSAN. Yes, sir. (*Aside.*) I wonder what they are up to now. (*Exit 2 E. R.*)

CRAM (*up C.*). Now —

MR. S. Wait till I secure every thing. (*Goes to 2 E. R.*)

BABIE (*entering I E. R., aside*). Diana didn't keep her appointment. What could have delayed her? Ah, her husband!

CRAM (*down L.*). Ah! here you are, Master Harry. If you only knew —

BABIE (*R.*). Knew what?

MR. S. (*up C.*). Your friend is there. (*Indicating 2 E. L.*)

BABIE. My friend!

MR. W. (*entering D. in F.*). His friend!

BABIE (*aside*). Papa!

MR. S. (*aside*). What! he here!

CRAM (*aside*). All up now!

MR. W. A lady in my room! What does this mean? (*Goes to 2 E. L.*)

CRAM (*up L.*). Oh! Mr. Ward —

MR. S. (*up L.*). I say, cousin —

MR. W. Let me go, gentlemen. (*Enters 2 E. L.; MR. S. and CRAM down L.*)

MR. S. (*to BABIE*). You're fixed.

BABIE. But how did this come about?

MR. W. (*re-enters, aside*). It's Diana. (*Shuts door violently.*)

CRAM. Well!

MR. S. Did you see her?

MR. W. Yes, yes: I've seen her. (*To BABIE.*) Oh, you Don Juan!

CRAM (*L.*). Don't agitate yourself, sir: he won't do it any more.

BABIE (*R.*). But, papa —

MR. S. (*up C.*). Well? what's all this fuss about? It was inevitable. The second phase, you know.

MR. W. (*up L.*). Oh, yes, the second! (*Aside.*) How blind the man is! (*Aloud.*) Gentlemen, do all of you go away: I will attend to this lady; I alone must see her. You, Skelter, go to your room. (*To BABIE.*) You, sir, go to your studies. I will explain myself later. Come, come, will you go?

MR. S. I'm going! (*Comes L.*) I'm going. (*Exit 1 E. L.*)

BABIE (*to C., meeting CRAM, low*). Do me a favor, Cram: take my twenty-five dollars, and buy her a little present, and tell her it's all up.

CRAM (*takes money, aside*). More money! That makes two for her.

BABIE (*to R., aside*). Poor Aurelia! (*Exit 1 E. R.*)

MR. W. You, Mr. Cram, go into the dining-room, and keep my wife and Susan from —

CRAM (*C.*). Very good, sir; but I have a commission to execute with Miss Aurelia.

MR. W. (*aside, down L.*). Ah, yes! the other. All right, we must break off with her also. (*Aloud.*) Here is my purse: you will buy her a little present, and take it to her immediately.

CRAM (*taking purse, aside*). That makes three. Really, this is quite like a subscription. (*Exit D. in F.*)

MR. W. (*up L.*). Oh, these boys! (*Opens 2 E. L.*) Come

out, madam, come out! (*Aside, down R.*) This is the third phase. (*Aloud to MRS. S.*) Oh, fie! (*MRS. S. enters 2 E. L.*)

MRS. S. (*down C.*) Oh, Mr. Ward, I beg you, don't expose me!

MR. W. Softly, softly: your husband is there. (*Indicating 1 E. L.*)

MRS. S. My husband! He is the cause of all this.

MR. W. How!

MRS. S. I discovered this morning that he was receiving a woman in Babie's room.

MR. W. (*aside*). He too!

MRS. S. Then I lost my prudence: I wanted to revenge myself. (*MR. W. makes gesture.*) But I am not so bad as that, I swear to you —

MR. S. (*outside*). Well!

MR. W. In a minute. I'm getting her away. — Come, come! if any one were to see you in this situation.

MRS. S. (*aside*). Ah, what a lesson!

(*Exeunt D. in F.*)

MR. S. (*enters 1 E. L., and looks in 2 E. L.*). Gone! What a pity! I'd like to have seen her.

CRAM (*entering 2 E. R.*). Can I come in?

MR. S. Yes, the bird is flown. What were you doing there? (*Both down C.*)

CRAM. Mr. Ward requested me to keep away his wife, and —

MR. S. Aha! I see through it. The old rat!

CRAM. But what impudence she displays, this Madame Aurelia!

MR. S. Aurelia?

CRAM. Yes: that was she in there. I saw her down stairs this morning, you know.

MR. S. Aurelia there!

CRAM. Why not?

MR. S. But — oh! it was me she came to see, no doubt.

CRAM. Eh!

MR. S. Certainly: Aurelia is not Babie's friend, she is mine.

CRAM. Oh! you know her?

MR. S. Once in three months.

CRAM (*aside*). They both have the same, then. (*Aloud.*) My congratulations. I never saw so attractive a blonde.

MR. S. Brunette, you mean.

CRAM. Not at all; blonde.

MR. S. I assure you, she's a decided brunette.

CRAM. You're joking, for I can swear she's an equally decided blonde.

MR. S. I *shall* swear directly if this goes on: will you try to teach *me* her complexion?

CRAM. Perhaps she has been bleached.

MR. S. She hasn't had time. She was dark this morning.

CRAM. I saw her light.

MR. S. Eyes black?

CRAM. Blue.

MR. S. Her figure?

CRAM. Slender.

MR. S. No: buxom.

CRAM. Well, if you call her buxom—

MR. S. Then it's not Aurelia, after all. By Jove, I can't make this out! Ah! I never thought: I have her picture. (*Shows photograph.*) Now we can easily settle this.

CRAM (*taking photograph*). Let us see. (*Looking, aside.*) My wife!

MR. S. Well!

CRAM. Is this Aurelia?

MR. S. To be sure.

CRAM. Aurelia, your friend Aurelia!

MR. S. Yes.

CRAM (*turning it over*). Yes, here is an inscription. That's enough. (*Puts it in pocket, goes R.*)

MR. S. Come now, give me back my picture.

CRAM. Never!

MR. S. What?

CRAM. Never! I tell you,

MR. S. By what right, may I ask, do you—

CRAM. By what right? She is my wife!

MR. S. Your wife! (*Falls back L.*)

CRAM. Fanny Gram to me; Aurelia to everybody else, it seems.

MR. S. Mr. Cram, I assure you, I have never—

CRAM. Don't defend yourself, don't defend yourself: if you only knew how much pleasure this gives me! (*Comes C.*)

MR. S. Eh!

CRAM. At last I have material for a divorce-suit, and reason for stopping that allowance. What a saving! What joy!

MR. S. He's mad!

CRAM (*coming L., and taking arm*). Come.

MR. S. Where?

CRAM. To my lawyer's.

MR. S. (*getting away*). To a lawyer's!

CRAM (*pulling*). Come, you won't escape me.

MR. S. (*seeing MR. W. enter D. in F.*). Ward! Not a word before him, I pray you.

CRAM. Very well! but you shall come nevertheless. (*Goes R.*)

MR. S. (*aside*). The deuce! I'm in a nice fix. (*Sits L.*)

CRAM (*aside R.*). What a lucky chance! (*Sits R., rubbing hands.*)

MR. W. (*coming down C., aside*). Diana is to come back as if nothing had happened. But what a fright I have had! What a fright! (*Aloud.*) Hallo, Skelter, what ails you? (*Goes L.*) Why, Skelter!

MR. S. What?

MR. W. What's the matter?

MR. S. Nothing, nothing! why do you ask? (*Rising.*) Is she gone?

MR. W. Who?

MR. S. The lady.

MR. W. Aurelia? Oh, yes! she's gone.

CRAM (*rising R.*). It wasn't Aurelia.

MR. W. (*to C.*). Eh!

CRAM. Aurelia, do you say?

MR. W. Certainly.

CRAM. Allow me. It was not Aurelia who was here.

MR. W. But —

CRAM. No: I knew her very well,

MR. S. (*low to MR. W.*). She's his wife.

MR. W. His wife! Bless my soul!

CRAM. There isn't the least resemblance.

MR. W. Between whom?

CRAM (*R.*). Between the two.

MR. W. (*C.*). The two what?

MR. S. (*L.*). Why, the two women.

MR. W. There were two women in my room?

CRAM. I only put one in there, and she wasn't my wife.

MR. W. But I never said she was.

CRAM. She whom I held in these arms was slender and a blonde.

MR. W. (*aside*). O Lord! (*Aloud.*) Cousin, I assure you —

MR. S. What then?

MR. W. That Mr. Cram — (*To Cram, low.*) For God's sake, agree with me.

CRAM. Eh?

MR. S. So, cousin, it is you who have something —

MR. W. I?

MR. S. You are agitated.

MR. W. Not at all.

MR. S. Why, you even tremble.

MR. W. Why should I tremble?

MR. S. That's exactly what I would like to find out. (*Seeing Mr. W. signal to Cram.*) Now, what the deuce does that mean?

MRS. W. (*entering 2 E. R. with SUSAN*). Is Diana here?

MR. W. (*aside*). O Lord!

MR. S. Why, I thought she was with you.

MRS. W. Oh, no! (*To fireplace.*)

MR. W. She is out, been out ever so long.

SUSAN (*up c.*). Why, I just saw her cross the street.

MR. W. (*aside, c.*). The idiot!

MR. S. (*overhearing, aside*). Ha, a suspicion! (*Aloud.*) Mr. Cram, you said the person concealed here was a slender blonde.

MR. W. No, no!

CRAM. Why, yes, she was.

MR. W. (*aside*). You ass, no!

MR. S. (*aside*). I understand all. (*Aloud.*) Hang every thing an inch high! That scoundrel of a Babie! (*Up c.; Cram to L.*)

SUSAN (*to fire*). Scoundrel!

MRS. W. What has Babie done to you?

MR. S. What has he done? Oh! you know very well.

MRS. W. (*aside*). Has he heard that Aurelia —

MR. S. I'll have his life. (*Down c., Mr. W. to R.*)

MRS. W. Kill Babie on account of that creature?

MR. S. A creature! My wife?

MRS. W. *and* SUSAN. Your wife!

CRAM (L., *aside*). His wife?

MR. W. (R.). Oh! I'll give you my word it was not she.

MR. S. Pooh, pooh, sir! you are as white as milk.

MR. W. It's my natural color.

MR. S. It's a lie, sir. But where is he? where is he? Aha! in his cursed ground floor. (*Rushes up C.*)

MR. W., MRS. W., *and* SUSAN. You mustn't go there. (*All up: MRS. W. bars way: he hurls her into husband's arms, and exit D. in F.*)

CRAM. Hallo! He's escaping, and the affidavit. (*Up C.*) Hallo! hold on, sir! (*Exit running D. in F.*)

MRS. W. (in chair R.). Oh, he's gone to murder Babie!

MR. W. (in arm-chair R.). Tell him to come up. Speak through the tube.

MRS. W. To be sure. (*To tube.*) Oh! I haven't the breath to sound the whistle. (*Falls back in chair.*)

MR. W. O woman! you are good for nothing in an emergency. (*Tries to whistle in tube, but staggers back to chair.*) Alas! I haven't either.

SUSAN. I can do it. (*In tube.*) Your cousin is after you: come up by the private way.

MRS. W. If he only heard! (*To Mr. W.*) But pray explain all this, sir.

MR. W. (*groaning*). I ought to have known it all beforehand. Skelter warned me.

MRS. W. Of what? That he loved his wife?

MR. W. The three phases.

SUSAN (L.). Here he is! (*All rise.*)

BABIE (*entering* I E. R., *running*). What the deuce is the row?

MR. W. (*falling on his neck*). Unfortunate boy! I don't get a chance to breathe before — (*Both a little up C.*)

BABIE (*choked*). I say, papa, it's I who can't breathe.

MRS. W. (*to the rescue*). Would you strangle the last of the Wards?

SUSAN (*pulling by W.'s coat-tails*). Don't carry on so, sir.

MR. W. (R. C.). Skelter knows all.

BABIE (C.). By Jove!

SUSAN (*up C.*). Escape while you can.

BABIE. Oh! I'm not afraid of him.

MRS. W. (L. C.). But he'll kill you like a dog.

BABIE. Pooh!

SUSAN. He's a perfect tiger.

BABIE. Don't fear, mamma; tigers—

SUSAN (*up c.*). Sh! some one is in the entry!

BABIE. He's coming, is he?

MRS. W. Yes, hide yourself. Conceal yourself somewhere.

MR. W. No, no: it's only Charlie.

CHARLIE (*entering D. in F.*). Good-afternoon, everybody. I came to get Harry to come.—

SUSAN. And hunt up some more women? (*L. of door.*)

CHARLIE. Women! (*R. of door.*)

BABIE. You haven't heard, then?

SUSAN. Somebody's coming.

MRS. W. It's the tiger!

CHARLIE. Now, by all that's mysterious! What tiger?

MRS. W. Quick, hide, Babie!

MR. W. No, no: it's Cram.

CRAM (*entering D. in F., pale and considerably tumbled*). Lord deliver us!

MR. W. Where's the other?

CRAM (*down L.*). He's mad, — stark, staring mad: he has toppled over bed, bureau, chairs, every thing in the room, including me.

MRS. W. Where is he now?

CRAM. Below; but he won't stay long, so look out for yourselves.

MRS. W. O Mr. Cram! what shall we do?

CRAM. If we could only make him believe it was somebody else!

ALL. But how?

CRAM. Put another blonde in his wife's place. He has no proof, you know.

SUSAN. Another woman! (*Aside.*) An idea! (*Down R.*)

CRAM. Unfortunately my wife won't do.

CHARLIE (*at D. in F.*). Here he is.

SUSAN (*R., low*). Agree to all I say, and I'll save you. (*Aloud:*) No, ma'am, I won't stay another minute in this house.

MR. S. (*at D. in F.*). Ah-h! Here he is!

SUSAN. For I won't expose myself to any new affront from your son's friends.

MR. S. (*aside*). What's this?

MRS. W. My son's friends?

SUSAN. To be sure! The woman who was here a minute ago. (*Aside*.) Say something.

MRS. W. But this woman is not —

SUSAN. Indeed! Does an honest woman give her picture to every young man? Here's her photograph which I found on his table. (*CHARLIE down.*)

MR. S. (*aside*). What does this mean?

CHARLIE (*seeing*). Annie's picture! (*Aside.*)

BABIE. Shut up! (*Both down R.*)

SUSAN (*L. to CRAM*). Mr. Cram knows her. He saw her here. (*Low.*) Say it's the same.

CRAM (*taking photograph*). Surely it is she:

(*SUSAN up to fire.*)

MR. S. (*down L.*). Let me see it. (*Looking.*) Don't know her. (*To CRAM.*) Is this the person who was in that room?

CRAM. Oh, yes! the same. I recognize her perfectly.

MR. W. (*C.*). So do I.

MR. S. (*L.*). She is a blonde. But why didn't you tell me.

MR. W. It's a woman who has a reputation to keep; otherwise —

(*CHARLIE and BABIE laugh, and exchange looks.*)

MRS. S. (*entering D. in F.*). I declare, I thought I never should have finished. (*Down C.*)

ALL (*aside*). His wife. (*MRS. W. L. on sofa.*)

MR. S. (*aside*). My wife! Now we shall see. (*Conducts her to CRAM, L.*) You don't bow to this gentleman.

MRS. S. Certainly not. I don't know him.

CRAM. This is the first time I have had the pleasure of seeing the lady.

MR. S. Indeed! (*MRS. S. sits by MRS. W.*)

SUSAN (*aside up R.*). Saved!

CRAM (*L.*). My turn now. (*Low, pointing to MRS. S.*) Who is that lady, whom I don't know?

MR. S. My wife.

CRAM. Oh! — it's — yes — well, will you come with me to my lawyer's?

MR. S. Never!

CRAM. Shall I tell your wife about —

MR. S. No, no! I'll come whenever you like.

CRAM (*aside*). I'll save that allowance yet.

MRS. S. (*to* MR. S.). Mrs. Ward asks the hand of my sister Matilda in marriage for Babie. (BABIE *and* CHARLIE *bus.*)

MR. S. Agreed. (*low* to MR. W.) All my scruples are removed. He has proved himself worthy of matrimony by my own standards. Well, what did I tell you, Ward? The three phases. The chambermaids—

MR. W. The—ahem—Aurelias.

CRAM (*grasping* MR. S.'s hand, *and shaking it*). And the married women!

SUSAN.

MR. S.

MRS. W.

MR. W.

MRS. S.

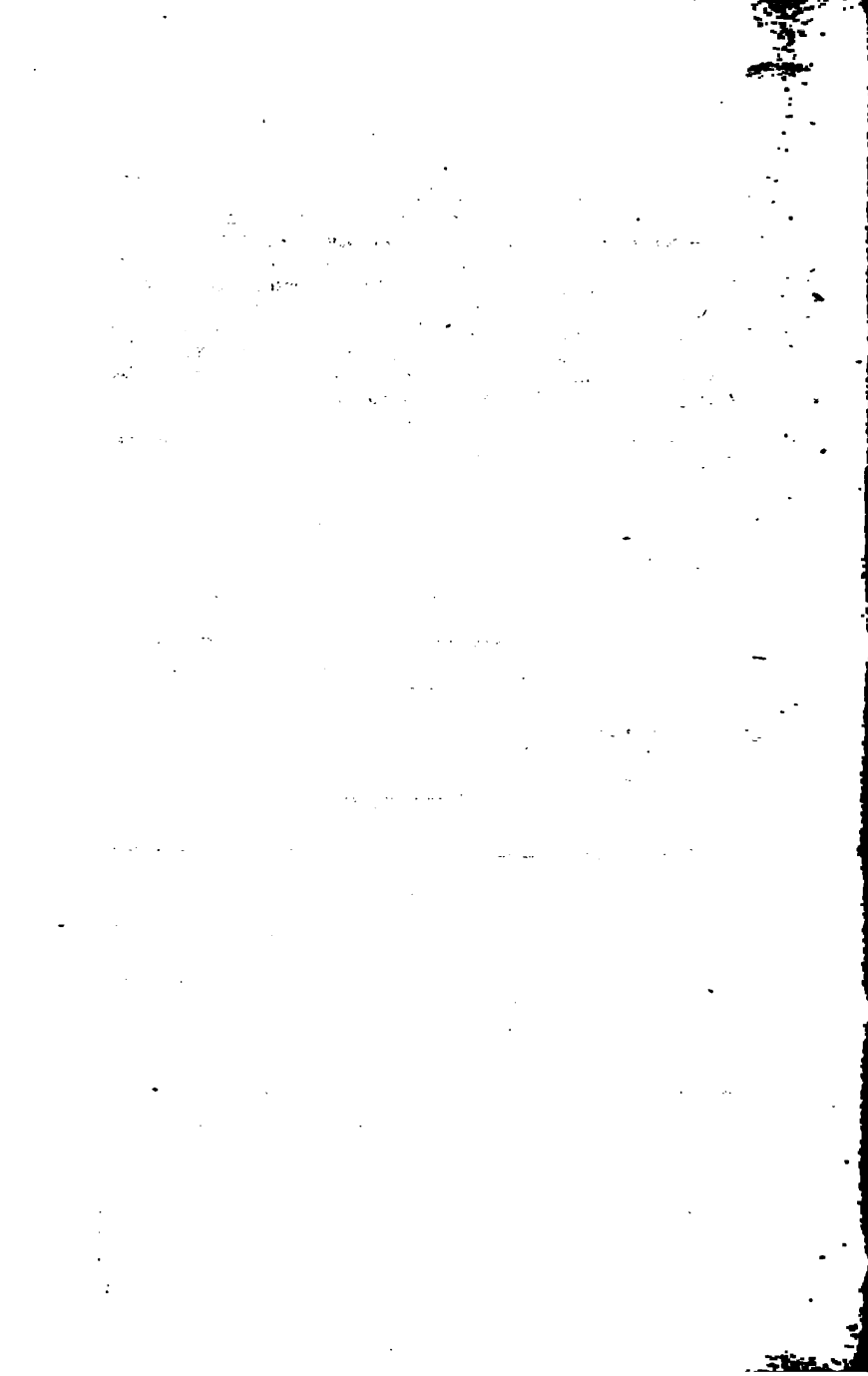
CRAM.

CHARLIE.

BABIE.

DISPOSITION.

(*Curtain.*)



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